

# Healthy Eating Policy

December 2022

## Policy Statement

At Houghton and Wyton Pre-school Playgroup we regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. At snack and mealtimes, we aim for the children to have nutritious food, which meets each of their individual dietary needs.

## Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the health policy)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form/Health care plan and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up to date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We ask parents to provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We provide parents with sample Snack and Lunch menu ideas before starting Pre School.
- As part of our cooking sessions, we include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- We take care not to have food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups, to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, as well as about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.

- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through finding their own snack and lunch boxes, having a go at opening and closing pots and lids.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day, they also each are encouraged to bring a water bottle with them daily.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the setting and recommend icepacks be supplied with packed lunches.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We provide semi skimmed milk and water at snack times.

### **Snack pots and Packed lunches**

We:

- ensure perishable contents of snack pots and packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches (or alternative) with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche, if bringing hot food, we ask for it to be heated at home and put in a hot flask (we cannot reheat at pre-school). We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweets/sweet products such as cakes, chocolates or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;

- We are however aware that some children have aversions from certain foods, sensory issues around food or allergies which limit eating certain food types, in these circumstances we will work with the individual family and try to offer support and alternatives.
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure staff sit with children to eat their snack and lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion, this can also encourage children to eat their meals, teach the use of cutlery, and model good eating habits.

### Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

### Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

*This policy was adopted at a meeting of HOUGHTON & WYTON PRE-SCHOOL PLAYGROUP*

*To be reviewed as required.*

*Signed on behalf of the Parent Management Committee:*



*Name of Signatory: Claire Anderson*

*Role of Signatory: CHAIRPERSON*

### Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (Ed. 2010)
- The Early Years Essential Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)