



Healthy Eating Policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:

Torphins Playgroup Pre-School

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On (date)

Signed Designation

1. Statement of Purpose

The promotion of children's healthy eating is an important aspect of high quality childcare and children should have a positive experience which helps to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

Healthy Eating should be promoted in all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings by providing a well-balanced and nutritious diet. All children in ELC settings need regular healthy meals, snacks and drinks to help develop their health and well-being. Through sharing a positive food experience with others, children's language and social skills can be developed. It is important for staff to consider the individual and cultural needs of any children in their care.

Throughout this guidance the term **parents** is used to include all main caregivers.

2. Wellbeing

No matter what the age of the child from babyhood onwards, health and wellbeing is the principal driving force behind children growing up and learning. The wellbeing indicators of GIRFEC, for children to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included are implicit. It is also well known that a healthy diet and regular physical exercise are fundamental for a healthy childhood. Babies and young children need a healthy balanced diet to support brain development and physical development. (As per Realising the Ambition: Being Me (Scottish Government 2020) Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014).

3. Menu Planning

We will ensure that a well-balanced, healthy and nutritious diet is provided for all children. When planning a menu staff will consider the individual nutritional needs of the children, the children's stage of development, any allergies they may have and their cultural background.

Parents will be asked to provide specific and detailed information regarding any allergies/food preferences, symptoms, emergency procedures and emergency contacts in their children's individual Care Plans which they complete upon registration with the setting. As far as is possible, food choices will be provided that will suit all of the children's dietary requirements/preferences on any given day i.e. everyone will receive a non-dairy snack or drink on a day that a child attends with a dairy allergy or intolerance.

For reference, we will have a list of all children with an allergy or food preference on the back of the foodstore cabinet door in the kitchen. There will be a photograph of the child with a detailed list of their allergens and or food preferences. We will also have flowcharts on the walls highlighting the process to be followed if one of the children with an allergy comes into contact with an allergen within the setting. Parents are specifically asked for permission to display their child's allergens, food preferences and flowcharts within the setting in their child's Care Plan. This is in accordance with Setting the Table – Allergies. Our Setting the Table guidance booklet is stored on the shelving unit in the office.

Parents will be given the opportunity to review their child's dietary needs as detailed in their Care Plan regularly and changes will be recorded and acted upon, as appropriate.

Under the provisions of the Food Information for Consumers Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, we are legally obliged to provide allergen information highlighting any of the "specified group of 14 allergens" present in any of the food we serve at snack time or at any other time during the session.

The 14 Allergens

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1. Cereals containing gluten
2. Peanuts
3. Tree nuts
4. Sesame
5. Fish
6. Shellfish (Crustaceans)
7. Molluscs
8. Eggs
9. Milk
10. Soya
11. Mustard
12. Celery (and celeriac)
13. Lupin
14. Sulphur Dioxide

The planned menu will ensure children experience a wide variety of food options from the different food groups. Menus can be divided into meals, snacks and drinks and each of these areas will include fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and water. Water should be available to all children throughout the session and milk, as well as water, should be offered at snack and meal times. Meals will reflect a balance from the different food groups (starchy food, fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, eggs and pulses). Food containing large quantities of fat, sugar, artificial additives and colouring will be avoided. Further information on Menu Planning can be found in *Setting the Table, Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland* (NHS Scotland 2015 p76).

As Torphins Playgroup Pre-School is a local authority setting, menus will be provided.

4. Environment

The environment should be calm and welcoming and encourage positive social interaction amongst children and staff. Meal and snack times should be used to develop good table manners, establish healthy eating patterns and develop regular eating routines in children. Independence skills should be developed by offering children food and drink choices, and encouraging children to serve and feed themselves. Children should be given time to eat at their own pace and not be rushed. Consideration should be given to the space and managing of meal/snack times as well as the type of food provided. Suitable equipment will be provided for all children taking into account their individual needs and stage of development to ensure a positive experience.

5. Space to Eat

Provision of food is an integral part of a care and learning environment. When children have a positive experience of eating and drinking in an early learning and childcare service, it will help them to develop an appreciation that eating can be an enjoyable activity, and understand the role of food within social and cultural contexts on long term health benefits. As per Space to Grow (The Scottish Government 2017).

6. Good Eating Habits

Positive eating habits should be encouraged. Staff should provide an enjoyable, flexible eating experience within the setting, enabling children to develop good eating patterns. Children should experience a variety of different foods and regularly be introduced to new foods. They should be encouraged to try small quantities of all types of foods unless on a

special diet or for cultural reasons. Quantities of food/drink offered will be determined by the ages of the children and their individual needs.

If a child does not want to eat a meal or shows signs of distress the food should be removed, without fuss, after a reasonable time. A healthy snack should be offered later in the day to the child. Any child who has not eaten their main course should not be denied dessert. Relevant information regarding the child's eating habits should be recorded and parents should be informed.

Staff should ensure a consistent approach in relation to children's eating habits and offer praise and encouragement whenever possible. Through play, positive attitudes to healthy eating should be developed.

7. Food Policy

- We will provide a supportive environment for families who wish to continue to provide their child with breast milk and for mothers who wish to breastfeed in our setting.
- Weekly meal and snack menus will be distributed to parents. Allergens within each individual item will be highlighted.
- Children who have not eaten breakfast at home will be offered this when they arrive at the setting, if this is agreed with parents.
- Children will be given the opportunity to help prepare their own snacks, with staff supervision. This will provide them with a variety of learning and social opportunities e.g. weighing and measuring, safety and handwashing, sharing and working together as well as celebrating success. They will also experience skills such as pouring, mixing, cutting and peeling.
- All dairy products will be full-fat, unless the parent requests that their child receive an alternative (they may be asked to provide suitable dairy products for their child).
- Children will be encouraged to bring their own water bottle to the setting each day. Water bottles will be stored on the water tray and children will have access to their bottles throughout the day.
- Children will be allowed to have second helpings of fruit or vegetables if still hungry.
- Children who do not eat the food on offer will be offered an acceptable alternative, where possible.
- Parents of children requiring special diets will be asked to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods and in some cases may be asked to provide the food themselves. Foods will be clearly labelled with the child's name and will be regularly date checked to ensure that they are within their recommended use by date.
- Where possible, staff will sit with the children while they eat and will provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- Sharing of food between the children is prohibited given that the children may not be aware of their own or others allergies/intolerances. However, children will be encouraged to help each other with their food and drink by passing serving bowls between each other and pouring drinks, to develop social skills and support good manners.
- Withholding food will not be used as a form of punishment.

- If a parent wishes to bring food to the setting to be shared amongst the children i.e. birthday cake, it should be a purchased product, presented in its unopened packaging to allow allergen information to be recorded. Where possible, this food will be sent home with the children to enjoy at home.
- On occasional special occasions, staff may provide a 'treat' such as chocolate, biscuits or sweets as part of activities, taking into account any individual dietary needs.

Information regarding frameworks for food policy development can be found in *Setting the Table, Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland* (NHS Scotland 2015 pp86-91).

8. Partnership with Families

The setting will work in partnership with parents and any other relevant agencies in their community to promote healthy eating. The weekly menu will be displayed in advance and available for parents and children to view. Parents should be made aware of what their child has eaten and how well they have eaten through regular informal contact.

9. Staff Development

The preparation and handling of food should be carried out by competent staff who will have sufficient knowledge to ensure food is safe to eat. Staff should receive training in food hygiene.

Food safety and hygiene is the responsibility of each individual setting. The local authority environmental health department will have up to date information regarding food safety legislation and procedures. In line with good practice the setting should aim to have at least one staff member who has a basic food hygiene certificate. *As per Setting the Table, Nutritional Guidance and Food Standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland* (NHS Scotland 2015 p95).

10. Food Safety and Hygiene

- Staff preparing snack should wash their hands with hot, soapy water in the bathroom prior to commencing food preparation. They should wear a white disposable apron and disposable gloves.
- Never cough or sneeze over food and avoid touching mouth, nose or hair while preparing food.
- Cover any cuts or wounds on your hand straight away with a waterproof dressing. This helps healing and stops germs getting in or out.
- Avoid handling food if suffering from a cold, skin infection or stomach upset. If this is unavoidable, take extra care.
- Keep the kitchen clean. Use a solution of hot water and detergent or ready-to-use contact surface cleaner to clean work surfaces, cutting boards and utensils and dining tables.
- Kitchen floor should be mopped immediately after spillage to prevent slipping.
- All cleaning materials are to be stored in the designated kitchen cupboard, out of reach of children.
- Protect food from insects and animals.
- Prior to preparing or serving snack, staff should cross check the register to the list of children on display with food allergies or intolerances to ensure that all food and drink to be served is safe and suitable.

- When preparing raw meats and poultry, keep them away from cooked food, fresh fruit and vegetables.
 - Use separate cutting boards for raw ingredients and vegetables.
 - Foods that are not cooked before they are eaten, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, should be rinsed under running tap water.
 - Stones or pips should be removed from fruit and vegetables before serving. Small fruit and vegetables such as cherry tomatoes and grapes should be sliced, halved lengthways or chopped prior to serving. Large fruits should be cut into slices rather than chunks.
 - Whole nuts will be avoided. The setting will be a 'Nut-free zone' if there is a child attending the setting with a nut allergy.
 - Keep hot foods hot (63C) and cold foods cold (between 0 and 5C). If perishable foods are brought from home, they should be kept in a refrigerator or a cool place between 0 and 5C.
 - All foods must be stored appropriately. Kitchen cupboards and the refrigerator should be checked regularly to ensure that all products are within date and are safe to use. All out-of-date products should be disposed of immediately.
 - Keep the fridge between 0 and 5C. Use a fridge thermometer to check the temperature daily when the setting is in operation.
 - Cook foods thoroughly, especially raw meat, poultry and eggs to destroy harmful germs.
 - Eat foods soon after they have been cooked so that harmful germs do not have time to grow.
 - Do not use unpasteurised milk or milk-based products. If parents bring in goat or sheep's milk for their child, check with the parent if the milk needs to be boiled.
 - Do not reheat food more than once and avoid having leftovers.
 - Children should wash their hands with hot, soapy water in the bathroom immediately prior to having or helping prepare snack.
 - Children should remain seated while helping prepare snack or whilst eating to prevent choking.
 - Staff are responsible for the safety and welfare of the children in the kitchen area and whilst using kitchen equipment i.e. cooker. Children must at no time be left unsupervised in the kitchen. All kitchen utensils e.g. knives and scissors must not be left unattended and must be kept out of reach of children.
 - Electrical items i.e. kettle & toaster should be kept well back on kitchen worktop and should be switched off when not in use.
 - All dishes and utensils are to be washed in the 'Clean' sink or in the dishwasher. Thereafter they are to be left to drip dry and be put away at the end of each session.
 - All kitchen cloths and tea towels are to be changed daily and washed at an appropriate temperature. Please refer to the shelf labels in the kitchen cupboard to ensure that the correct cloths are being used for the correct purpose.
 - The general waste bin in the kitchen is to be emptied daily into the outdoor black bin.
- Any recyclable packaging is to be washed and kept in the recycling bin in the kitchen. It should be emptied daily into the outdoor blue lidded bin.
- The food waste caddy is to be emptied daily into the outdoor food bin.
- Indoor bins should be washed daily or as required.

Monitoring of this Policy

It will be the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that new or temporary staff are familiar with this policy and that the policy is being implemented by all staff.

See also:

Infection Control Policy

Links to national policy

Health and Social Care Standards – My Support My Life (The Scottish Government 2017)

Space to Grow - Section 02 Environment

<https://hub.careinspectorate.com/media/549001/space-to-grow.pdf>