Blanchelande College

Healthy Eating, Nutrition and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Statement

At our nursery, we recognise that children's health and wellbeing are fundamental to their learning, development, and happiness. We are committed to providing a nurturing environment that supports children's emotional wellbeing, healthy eating habits, oral health, physical development, and individual dietary needs.

Snack and mealtimes are an important part of the nursery day. They provide opportunities for children to develop independence, social skills, positive attitudes towards food, and an understanding of healthy choices. We aim to work in partnership with parents, carers, and relevant health professionals to ensure every child's wellbeing needs are supported.

We promote healthy eating through nutritious meals, positive role modelling, education, and by creating a welcoming environment where children can explore and enjoy a wide variety of foods.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Objective

To provide a safe, caring, and inclusive environment where children feel secure, valued, and emotionally supported.

How we do it:

- We provide a warm, nurturing environment where children are encouraged to express their feelings and emotions.
- Staff build positive relationships with children and respond sensitively to their individual emotional needs.
- Children are supported through reassurance, comfort, encouragement, and positive interactions.
- Staff are trained to recognise signs that a child may be experiencing emotional distress or changes in behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to develop confidence, resilience, empathy, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities.
- We support children in managing conflicts through age-appropriate discussions about feelings, sharing, kindness, and respect.
- We work closely with parents and carers to share information about children's emotional wellbeing and seek professional support where appropriate.

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Healthy Eating and Nutrition

Objective

To provide nutritious, balanced meals and snacks that support children's growth, development, and lifelong healthy eating habits.

We aim to promote healthy eating in line with current early years guidance and work with health professionals, including the Health Improvement Commission, where appropriate.

Providing Healthy Food and Drinks

We will:

- Provide balanced and age-appropriate meals and snacks that include a variety of:
    - Fruits and vegetables
    - Carbohydrates
    - Protein sources
    - Dairy products or suitable alternatives
- Offer children opportunities to experience different tastes, textures, colours, and flavours.
- Provide suitable portion sizes according to children's ages and stages of development.
- Ensure fresh drinking water is available throughout the day.
- Encourage parents to provide only water in children's bottles.
- Display menus for parents and carers to view.

Meal and snack times are treated as social occasions where children can enjoy food, develop independence, and learn positive eating behaviours.

Dietary Requirements, Allergies and Food Preferences

Before children start at nursery, parents and carers are asked to provide information about:

- Dietary requirements
- Allergies and intolerances
- Cultural or religious dietary needs
- Vegetarian or vegan preferences
- Food likes and dislikes

This information is recorded on registration documents and regularly reviewed with parents to ensure records remain accurate.

We will:

- Ensure all children receive food and drinks appropriate to their individual needs.
- Maintain clear records of allergies and dietary requirements so all staff are aware.
- Treat children's dietary needs sensitively and ensure children are not made to feel different or excluded.

- Respect cultural, religious, and personal dietary choices.

Parents and carers are asked not to provide foods containing nuts in lunch boxes or snacks.

All catered food provided by the nursery does not contain nuts. If a child brings nuts or food containing nuts into nursery, these will be safely removed from access and stored securely for collection by parents.

Children requiring emergency medication, such as an adrenaline auto-injector, will have this stored safely and remain accessible according to the child's individual healthcare plan.

Food Safety and Hygiene

We follow strict food hygiene procedures to ensure children are provided with safe food and drinks.

Procedures

- Food preparation follows HACCP principles to identify and reduce risks.
- Measures are in place to minimise cross-contamination, particularly for children with allergies.
- Staff handling food follow good hygiene practices, including:
    - Washing hands before food preparation and between handling different foods.
    - Tying back long hair.
    - Covering wounds appropriately.
    - Not preparing food when unwell or when there is a risk of contamination.
- Staff with skin conditions affecting their hands take appropriate precautions, including wearing gloves where necessary.
- Staff preparing food hold appropriate food hygiene training.

Positive Mealtime Experiences

We aim to make mealtimes enjoyable, relaxed, and supportive.

Staff will:

- Sit with children during meals
- Encourage positive conversations about food.
- Provide child-friendly utensils suitable for children's developmental stages.
- Encourage children's independence with eating and drinking.
- Support children to develop confidence and self-help skills.
- Encourage children to explore food.

Children are discouraged from sharing or swapping food unless supervised as part of a planned activity, to protect children with allergies and dietary requirements.

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Supporting Fussy Eaters

Objective

To support children who experience difficulties with eating by creating a positive, patient, and encouraging mealtime environment.

Procedures

Communication with Families

- Staff communicate regularly with parents and carers about children's eating habits, preferences, and concerns.
- Information is shared between staff to ensure consistent support.

Menu Planning

We provide:

- A varied and nutritious menu.
- Age-appropriate portion sizes.
- A balance of fruits, vegetables, carbohydrates, and proteins.
- Opportunities for children to try new foods.

Encouraging Positive Eating Habits

Staff will:

- Provide a calm and welcoming eating environment.
- Encourage children to eat.
- Not use negative comments about food choices.
- Praise children for trying new foods and developing independence.
- Encourage children to explore food at their own pace.

Food Exploration

- New foods are introduced gradually and repeatedly.
- Children are encouraged to experience different textures, colours, and flavours.
- Staff understand that children may need multiple opportunities before accepting new foods.

Monitoring and Support

- Staff monitor children's eating habits and share relevant information with parents.
- Concerns about a child's eating patterns, growth, or nutrition will be discussed with parents and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals such as a paediatrician or nutritionist.

Oral Health

Objective

To encourage good oral hygiene habits and support children in maintaining healthy teeth and gums.

Procedures

We will:

- Teach children about the importance of looking after their teeth.
- Encourage daily tooth brushing routines.
- Promote drinking water as the healthiest drink choice.
- Encourage parents and carers to arrange regular dental check-ups for their children.
- Provide information and guidance about oral health practices.

Physical Activity and Development

Objective

To support children's physical development and encourage active lifestyles.

Procedures

We provide regular opportunities for children to:

- Engage in outdoor physical play.
- Explore movement, exercise, and active games.
- Develop gross motor skills such as running, climbing, balancing, and coordination.
- Develop fine motor skills through age-appropriate activities and resources in the environment.

Indoor physical activities are provided during unsuitable weather conditions to ensure children remain active throughout the year. Outdoor play is encouraged all year, during most weathers.

Children's safety is prioritised at all times. Staff supervise activities appropriately, and risk assessments are completed and reviewed where required.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We value the important role parents and carers play in supporting children's health and wellbeing.

We will:

- Maintain regular communication regarding children's dietary, emotional, and developmental needs.
- Encourage parents to share updates about allergies, preferences, and changes in circumstances.
- Welcome feedback about our food provision and wellbeing practices.
- Work together to provide consistency between nursery and home.