



Food and drink

At Stre[†]ton Pre School, we encourage children to develop a healthy attitude towards food and drink and healthy lifestyles. We achieve this through adopting a whole setting approach which encompasses children, their families and our staff. We believe snack and mealtimes are an important part of the day, representing a calm but social time for children and adults. We aim to provide nutritious foods, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and adheres to the Allergen Law (2014). (www.food.gov.uk)

Introduction

This policy recognises that children under the age of 5 years, have a different needs nutritionally than those of older children and adults. Children under 5 years have a high energy and nutrient requirement in relation to their size. Early Years is a very important time to shape and encourage a healthy relationship with food, healthy food preferences and lifestyle choices. We do this by allowing children to make their own selections through guided choice: this has a positive impact on health later in life.

This policy covers general nutritional guidance as set out by the Government, Local Health Authorities and the EYFS welfare requirement for healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drink. Where a child has individual needs, this is acknowledged and supported in partnership with the parent/carer. Should parents/carers have concerns around their child's eating habits, they should discuss these with their Health Visitor, GP or Dietician.

Where there are barriers to healthy eating such as financial difficulties, injury or illness, the setting will support families and are able to sign post to external agencies, food banks or support groups.

Procedures

Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask about any dietary needs and preferences, and we have regard to the 14 allergens as stated in the Allergen Law (2014).

(www.food.gov.uk)

1. Celery
2. Cereals containing Gluten (such as Barley and Oats).
3. Crustaceans (such as Prawns, Crabs and Lobsters).
4. Eggs
5. Fish
6. Lupin
7. Milk
8. Molluscs (such as Mussels and Oysters)

9. Mustard
10. Peanuts
11. Sesame
12. Soybeans
13. Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites
14. Tree nuts (such as Almonds, Hazelnuts,
15. Walnuts, Brazil nuts, Cashews, Pecans, Pistachios and Macadamia nuts)

Parents/carers are asked to record detailed information about their each child's individual dietary needs on their Registration Form.

We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of a child's dietary needs are up to date and encourage parents to inform us immediately of any changes so our allergy/dietary notices can be updated accordingly.

We display current information about children's dietary information in the kitchen cupboard and on the notice board within the room (removed daily to comply with GDPR). This is to keep all staff/volunteers informed about them.

We implement systems so that children only receive food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes, this also includes any cultural needs. (i.e.: no gelatine, pork).

On a daily basis, we record what foods children have had for snack on our information boards displayed outside, we underline any foods that contain a known allergen. Parents are aware of our process and understand the reason we underline certain foods. We share our menu with parents to avoid duplication in evening meals.

We provide nutritious foods for snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.

We include foods from the diet of each child's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and encouraging and introducing new ones.

We are a nut free setting, our parents are aware of this and understand the reason for being so.

Through discussion with parents/carers and research reading, we obtain information about the dietary requirements of religious and cultural backgrounds that children and families belong to, this includes the requirements of vegan, vegetarian and food intolerances. We take this into account in the provision of food and drinks.

We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy, cultural background or preferences as a label for the child, or make the child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.

We use snack and meal times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food, drink, feeding themselves and helping with washing up.

We provide children with china dishes, plates and cups and real feeding utensils (knives, forks and spoons), this is to reduce our use of plastics and support good values and experiences of real world items. Depending on the age/stage of some children they can be offered a plastic alternative.

We have fresh drinking water available constantly for children, whatever time of year and we inform the children about how to obtain water or that they can ask for water at any time during the day, we also refill water bottles when they are empty.

We inform parents about how their provided food is stored at pre-school (packed lunches). Packed lunches are stored in the fridge and brought out at lunchtime.

We inform parents about suitable containers for packed lunches/provided foods.

In order to protect children with food allergies or intolerance's, we discourage children from sharing or swapping food items with their peers.

We provide semi skimmed pasteurised milk for all children (green top) for all children at snack and lunch times.

Packed lunches

We actively encourage parents to provide a healthy and nutritious packed lunch and acknowledge that this does not always mean sandwiches. Some children find sandwiches bland and overwhelming. Wraps, pittas, lough dough pizza, pasta, rice are all good alternatives. Fruit and vegetables should be included and cakes, sweet items should be kept to one item per lunch box.

We check packed lunch boxes daily to ensure they are nut free and that all items are in date and contain a good variety of items. Where necessary, items will be returned to the parent/carer at the end of the day/session with a note and what alternative was provided.

We ensure that all packed lunches are stored in the refrigerator.

In line with Environmental Health Department advice, fabric lunch boxes are not allowed due to the risk of bacteria in the fabric. If a child does bring in a fabric lunch box, the contents

are transferred to a clean plastic sandwich bag and the fabric one returned to the parent at the end of the session.

We ask parents to cut items such as grapes, olives and cherry tomatoes into quarters lengthways to reduce the risk of choking.

All parents are informed of our Healthy eating policy and know where to find it for reference if needed.

Where parents use sandwiches in packed lunches, we encourage healthy fillings such as grated cheese, chicken, ham, tuna, egg, salad leaves. We also encourage that the amounts provided be proportioned and appropriate to their age.

Milk based desserts such as yogurts and crème fraiche are encouraged.

Any child who shows signs of distress at snack or lunch times with their packed lunch will have the item removed with no fuss and an alternative will be offered. If a child does not eat much lunch, this will be fed back to the parent on collection.

We discourage sugary drinks and we provide milk and water at snack and lunch times, this is to support children and parents/carers with promoting good early oral health. Oral health is now falls within Safeguarding under the new Statutory Framework in the Welfare section, that came into effect in September 2021.

The Framework states: " Oral health habits need to be formed from the earliest age. Tooth decay is largely preventable, but it is still a serious problem among young children. Nearly a quarter of 5 year olds in England have tooth decay with 3 to 4 teeth affected on average. Tooth extraction is one of the most common procedures for children under 6".

We actively discourage contents that largely contain crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes and biscuits. We reserve the right to return these items to the parent as a last resort as this goes against our healthy eating ethos.

We will provide children with cutlery and cups if needed at lunch time.

We ensure that the adults sit with children at lunch times to assist them and ensure that lunch times are a calm and sociable time.

Adults actively encourage self-reliance and independence at lunch times but are there to support.

This policy was adopted by

Stretton Pre-School

On

01 November 2022

Date to be reviewed

Annually

Signed on behalf of the provider

E. Greenfield

Name of signatory

Emily Greenfield

Role of signatory

Chair

