Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

3.7 Food and drink

Policy statement

Stowey Bears Pre-school regards 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, balanced and nutritious food. We promote healthy eating at snack and mealtimes and aim to provide food and drink that meets children's individual dietary needs, allergies, intolerances, cultural and religious requirements, and the current Early Years Foundation Stage safeguarding and welfare requirements. We do not provide hot food at Stowey Bears. If a child requires a hot meal, parents and carers can book a lunch and dessert through Nether Stowey School.

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 Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form 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 updated record to signify that it is correct.
- Where a child has a food allergy or intolerance, we work with parents and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals to agree an allergy action plan before the child starts or as soon as the allergy is identified. The plan is reviewed regularly and shared with all relevant staff.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- Each child with a dietary requirement, allergy or intolerance has a named member of staff responsible for checking that any food or drink offered is suitable and safe for that child.
- 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 make information about the snacks we provide and the lunch and dessert booking arrangements through Nether Stowey School available to parents and carers.
- We provide nutritious food for all snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
  - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
  - dairy foods;
  - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and

- fruit and vegetables.

- 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 provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading, 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 show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We 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 adults participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- 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.
- We offer milk and water at snack times. We provide a rotating snack selection of toast, crackers, cereal and fruit.
- We do not offer sweetened drinks, fizzy drinks, smoothies or undiluted fruit juice as part of routine snack or meal provision.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting and we ask them to provide an ice pack for packed lunches.
- To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- When children are eating or drinking, they are seated safely, closely supervised and within sight and hearing of a member of staff. A member of staff with paediatric first aid training is available in line with EYFS requirements.
- Food is prepared and served in a way that reduces choking risk, including cutting small round foods lengthways and into quarters, removing stones, pips and bones, avoiding whole nuts and whole seeds for children under five, and ensuring food textures are appropriate to each child's age and stage of development.

Packed lunches

As Stowey Bears does not provide cooked meals, children may bring a packed lunch or parents and carers may book a lunch and dessert through Nether Stowey School. For packed lunches, we:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool; (Parents supply).
- We do not accept meals that require reheating. This is due to the practical limitations of our facilities and the additional staff training and food-safety procedures that reheating would require.
- We do not accept hot food in thermal flasks because of the risk of burns and scalds and because we cannot verify that the food has been stored and maintained at a safe temperature.
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating; all parents receive copies of our policies via email or printed copies.

- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, vegetables and milk-based desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where food is brought from home. We encourage children to be provided with water or plain milk and discourage sweet drinks;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. Where a lunch does not support healthy eating or presents an allergy or safety concern, we will speak with parents and agree suitable alternatives;
- ensure that adults sit with children when they eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, including safeguarding and welfare requirements for food, drink, allergies, safer eating and children's health.
- Food Safety Act 1990, Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013, and retained Regulation (EC) 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, Department for Education.
- Safer Food, Better Business, Food Standards Agency.
- Help for early years providers: food safety and safer eating guidance.

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Pre-school	*(name of provider)*
On		*(date)*
Date to be reviewed	Reviewed annually	*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider	*Rachel Penny*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	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)