

## Food policy

### Overall aim of the policy

This food policy demonstrates our commitment to early education and the intervention of child obesity in line with government targets. It also shows our commitment to the welfare and development of young children through the promotion of healthy eating, providing visual, physical and written information for all stakeholders of the setting.

### Mission statement

By meeting the requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), children within Clever Cloggs will be given opportunities, through a variety of foods and drinks, to increase and expand their knowledge and understanding to develop their likes and dislikes and understand their need for a variety healthy snacks, meals and drinks.

### Development and implementation of the food policy

The development of staff knowledge through training will support the development of the settings food policy and their commitment to the early education of young children. The standards of healthy snacks produced by the staff and the lunches brought in will provide visual support to the policy.

The policy will be published for all to see and will be incorporated into our policy booklet, staff handbook and student/volunteers guidelines. All staff, children and visitors are encouraged to support our food policy.

### When and who the policy applies to

- The policy applies to food provided by the setting for snack activities and treats, cooking activities and food provided at events or on trips.
- The policy applies to all staff/students and volunteers within the setting, including those planning menus, staff lunches and to parent/carers who bring food into the setting from home.
- To promote the policy everyone who it applies to will have access to a copy and it will be made available via the internet along with all our other policies. All policies will make up our handbooks for students, volunteers and staff.

### Food and drink provision

- Children can obtain free fresh drinking water at all times inside and out.
- There will be a selection of food made accessible for snack during both the morning and afternoon sessions. A pre-booked school cooked dinner will be available daily at cost for those families wishing to pay for this service above the normal childcare fee. Along with fresh water inside and out, milk will be accessible at snack times and for an accompaniment to the cooked dinners.
- The menu for snack time will be in conjunction with our healthy eating activity and will run on a half termly rota allowing for allergies, ethnic and religious beliefs.

Snack is made available as a free flow café, this allows the children to attend when they are ready. The morning session closes approximately 1 hour before lunchtime, the afternoon snack café opens approximately 1 hour after lunch has finished. All children are asked if they wish to have any snack before the café closes.

### Communicating and the eating environment

During the café session a member of staff will encourage social interaction and conversation using this time as a learning opportunity to develop numbers, sharing, choosing, amounts, likes and dislikes, sweet, sour, hard and soft fruits and the origins of fruit and the changes that food go through i.e. milk to cheese, yogurt.

The whole setting is a nut free zone and at times when food has been brought in which either contains nuts or the packaging indicates that the produce may contain nuts, letters and reminders will be sent home to address the situation, staff will also chat to the parent/carers at the end of the session and explain why the item was taken away. Newsletters are also used as a reminder.

### Celebrations and special occasions

Food and drink often play an important role at special occasions and events and provide opportunities for children to learn about food and drink from different religions and cultures. To celebrate the growing ethnic culture within the setting and build on our own knowledge and experiences, our snack menu and cooking activities will include a variety of foods to reflect this.

At different times of the year special ethnic and religious festivals occur that may coincide with our families beliefs. On these special occasions we will invite these families in to share their celebrations which will develop the children's understanding as well as our own learning and development.

Children with religious based dietary requirements will be catered for to enable them to enjoy activities or sessions the pre-school plans. When we provide ethnic foods for the children to sample, we will provide for all children paying attention to allergies and the needs of the families attending the setting.

### Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well

Fussy eating and fear of new foods are part of development affecting 10-20% of young children. To encourage children to try new foods within the setting we will not discuss diet and the health benefits in a negative way, we will share with the families of all children the good experiences had with food and at times when food is a barrier to a child's development we will use food as an everyday activity to help the children form different views and connections with food.

### Food brought in from home

As food is brought into the setting from home in the form of packed lunches, our welcoming booklet will include guidance and offer advice for families on the types of food and drink they should provide and work with them to support any allergies, ethnic or religious needs, to provide an inclusive setting.

We will provide menu's and display healthy food choices which will support the same or similar healthy food choices offered at home. This will ensure that children are receiving consistent messages about healthy eating.

The registration document asks specific questions on diet and allergies which helps parents/carers communicate any dietary needs or food allergies that their child/ren may have. Lunch box ideas are given to new parents and newsletters also informs parents of do's and don'ts.

### Learning about and Protecting children's health through food

Everyone working in early year's settings has a responsibility to protect children's health including helping children to maintain a healthy weight as they grow, and encouraging breastfeeding and good dental practices. To do this we will work with the attached Children's Centre to provide written information on child obesity, dental care for all our children and breastfeeding for all our nursing parents.

Learning about food is integrated into our settings educational plan. Key workers provide various activity plans in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The café will offer opportunities for children to learn about food products and their preparation including the process for hygiene and safety. This will include the development of knife, fork and spoon control along with the development of the key skills, pouring, spreading, cutting and mixing.

At lunchtimes the pre-school staff will sit with the children, identifying this as a social time, promoting further knowledge and development regarding healthy foods by engaging in conversations on items in lunch boxes, types of food, where it may have originated from and how it is made.

#### Cooking with children

Cooking with children is an enjoyable activity and an effective way to encourage all children to try and eat a wide range of foods. Sometimes children will try foods with peers more than their families. A rewards system of stickers is given for children who try or eat new foods, the healthy food of the week is produced in many ways to allow a child the chance to try the same food in various forms.

Cooking activities while being enjoyable will be a place to re-enforce key skills learnt through snack times allowing the children to become as independent as possible and providing them with foundation stones for building additional self-development and independence as time goes on.

#### Food safety and hygiene

The importance of food safety and hygiene regulations is a high priority within the setting. Food storage preparation and presentation is carried out in a safe and hygienic environment and children are taught basic hygiene from the first day.

It is important that food is stored in line with the food hygiene guidelines. They are used within their use by and best before dates and within the strict allergy protocol of the setting. Foods with nuts in or foods with packaging that is labelled 'may contain nuts' will not be purchased for consumption in the setting and gifts containing nuts should be removed from the setting at the earliest possible opportunity.

The staff are trained in food hygiene requirements and meet the guidance of the EYFS and are committed to providing an environment that achieves high standards above that set by the EYFS.

#### Evaluation and review of the setting's approach to food and drink provision

It is important for us to evaluate the impact our food policy has on our settings daily approaches towards food and drink and to provide evidence to review the food policy at regular intervals.

Through parent involvement and keeping up to date with current good practice on meeting the welfare requirements for food and drink we will work together with our stakeholders to plan new menus, produce written and visual information and visit the Children's Food Trust website: [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk) to keep up to date on all areas of eat better start better.

We will encourage parents to provide their views on the food policy along with all policies of the setting using the comment boxes on our yearly questionnaire.