

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

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

6.5 Food and drink

Policy statement

Safari Childcare Limited regard snack and meal times as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating. Safari Childcare Limited promote healthy eating using a range of resources and activities. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

Safari Childcare Limited 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.)
- Safari Childcare Limited ask parents to record information about their child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. This information is displayed in the kitchen and in the child's main play room.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning.
- Safari Childcare Limited display the menus of meals/snacks for parents to view in the entrance hallway.
- Safari Childcare Limited provide nutritious freshly prepared food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish are offered and make reasonable effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate in good communication and habits.
- Safari Childcare Limited use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves where possible.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- Safari Childcare Limited 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.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning, and/or staying late, an appropriate meal or snack.
- Safari Childcare Limited inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- Safari Childcare Limited give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk. Although we slowly introduce semi-skimmed milk from the age of two years; firstly into meals and dishes, such as on cereal or in white sauces, before offering it as a drink, so that the transition is gradual.
- For each child under two, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.

Packed lunches

Where children are required to bring packed lunches, Safari Childcare Limited:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents that we cannot microwave cooked food brought from home;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice;
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort;
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and

- ensure that children with packed lunches are not separated from their peers to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

- Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011)

This policy was adopted by	Safari Childcare Limited	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	July 2015	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	Autumn 2016	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Natalie Evans	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Setting Manager	

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)