



**the children's house**

A School Food Trust project to support young children and their families to cook and eat well

## **The Children's House Food Policy**

### **General Information**

**Name of setting: the children's house, Stallingborough**

**Name of staff member responsible for food policy: Sylvia Tiffney / Jo Robinson / Debbie Thomson**

**Date of policy implementation: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 - Reviewed annually**

### **Section 1**

#### **Overall aim of the policy**

To promote the health and well-being of children and their families through all food provided by the setting.

#### **Mission statement/rationale**

The children's house is passionate about healthy eating and considers appropriate nutrition for children is of vital importance. Eating well and enjoying our snacks and meals is part of the fabric of our nursery day.

#### **Development and implementation of the food policy**

- Distribute a copy of our menu and draft policy to parents, staff and children for their comments.
- Provide a suggestions box at both sites for any comments to be posted
- Staff will engage in discussion with children about the benefits of healthy eating and gather any relevant comments from them.
- When the policy has incorporated any relevant suggestions, the revised draft policy will be displayed on the notice board for staff, parents and children.
- Any comments received will be considered.
- The final food policy to be displayed on the notice board.

#### **When and who the policy applies to**

- This policy applies to all food provided by the setting both in the setting and on trips and events.

## Section 2

### Food and drink provision

- Drinking water is served with all meals and snacks and available for children at all times in their base rooms and when outside in the gardens.
- During the course of a day Breakfast, mid morning snack, lunch and mid afternoon snack and tea will be served. This food and drink will meet the nutritional guidelines provided by the School Food Trust voluntary guidelines.
- The menu cycle rotates on a 12 day programme. Menus change for Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.
- Breakfast is served early morning, rolling snack is provided from 9.30am until 11.00am. Lunch is served from 11.45am until 12.45pm, rolling mid afternoon snack is served at 2.30pm and high tea is served at 4pm.

### Communicating with children and families

- Our Menus are displayed showing daily menu, in our settings. Parents receive a copy of the full menu and food policy in our handbook when starting nursery.
- Staff give daily feed back to parents on their children's food intake.
- Regular discussions take place with parents with fussy eaters.
- An annual parent's survey requests feedback on our menus.
- A cook book of our recipes is provided by our cook for parent's to purchase.
- Parent's are invited to share their recipes and cooking with children particularly food from different cultures.
- Children will be asked by their Keyworkers about their food likes and dislikes in preparing our menus.

### The eating environment and social aspects of meal times

- Children and staff will hand wash before eating meals and snacks.
- Our main meals are served in our large airy hall for children from two years to five years. Snacks are served in their base rooms. Babies' meals are served in their base rooms.
- Appropriate sized furniture, real crockery and cutlery are used to help children eat independently.
- Children sit around tables for meals and snacks to enjoy food together and develop their social skills.
- Our older children are encouraged to lay the tables and clear the tables after their meals.
- Food is served in tureens to enable the children to help themselves to food.
- Staff share the meal with the children and guide and encourage the children to try a little of everything. Opportunities for extra helpings are available for children who are hungry.
- Food is never used as a reward or punishment.

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## **Celebrations and special occasions**

- Special occasions are celebrated in the nursery and sometimes with food provided by our cook in order to meet these nutritional guidelines.
- Parents are encouraged to bring in healthy foods for birthday celebrations.
- If birthday cakes are provided children are given a piece to take home.

## **Providing food for all**

- A procedure is in place to ensure all staff are aware of any special dietary requirements for our children.
- Parents are required to notify the staff on registration of their child their special dietary requirements, with confirmation of this need by a doctor or registered dietician.
- On joining the setting a discussion will take place with the child's Keyworker and Cook to ensure all the relevant information about special dietary needs are recorded on their file.
- Cook will develop a menu that suits the needs of the special dietary requirements, and also provides for a nutritionally well balanced menu.
- All children share a meal together around tables.
- Children with complex needs will have additional support with resources and staff support.
- A file illustrating the special dietary requirements of each of the children is kept in the dining hall for all staff to use and be aware of their needs.
- A different coloured plate is used for children with special dietary requirements to ensure any new staff, in the setting are aware of a different meal.

## **Encouraging fussy eaters to eat well**

- Children who are fussy eaters will be sat at a table with children who eat well and enjoy their food.
- Children will be given regular and repeated opportunities to try new foods.
- Staff will share the meal with children and encourage children to try new foods during mealtimes and play times.
- Strategies are in place for children who have tried the food and dislike it, to get rid of the food in their mouth.
- Children who try new foods will be given praise.
- Other foods will not be used as a reward.
- Children will manage the amount they eat.
- Children will never be forced to eat; small servings will be offered at first with the opportunity for extra helpings if they like the food.

## **Food brought in from home**

- If food is brought into the setting from home parents will be given guidelines on healthy food.
- No cooked food can be brought in from home.
- Food brought in from home will not be cooked in setting.

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## Learning about and through food

Learning about food is integrated into nursery curriculum.

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Meal times offer children experiences to taste different foods. Cooking activities with children offer opportunities for learning and raising self esteem.

### Physical Development

- Fine and gross motor skills are developed through activities such as gardening, using knives and forks in food preparation and washing up.

### Literacy

- Language is developed through teaching about food, ingredients, cooking, cultural foods and special occasion foods. Discussion of food tastes and texture, size and colour provide for rich language experiences.

### Mathematics

- Children are encouraged to participate in counting and sorting cutlery and crockery when setting the tables. Sorting and matching foods into different types of fruit or vegetables is an activity provided which helps promote organisational skills.

### Communication and Language

- Children will share a meal sitting around a table with a member of staff who will encourage conversation at mealtimes. Older children help the younger children with their meals.

### Understanding the World

- Children are given opportunities for food tasting to encourage their understanding of different tastes and cultures.
- Staff will discuss with children where different foods come from.
- Children will grow some of their own vegetables and herbs, teaching children about life cycles, and about caring for plants.

### Expressive Arts and Design.

- A range of art and craft activities are provided for children which enable children to learn about colour and shapes.

## Cooking with children

- A range of cooking activities are provided for children, which involve mixing, weighing, cutting and chopping.
- Cutting and chopping fruit and vegetables is regular activity when children are shown how to cut and chop safely with staff observing and supporting.
- A risk assessment is undertaken before any cooking activity takes place.
- All cooking equipment is sterilised prior to use and on completion.
- Children are given time to participate in cooking activities.
- Cakes made by the children are taken home to enjoy with a meal at home.

## Food safety and hygiene

- All food is stored safely and hygienically and has gained Five Stars with the Local Authority and the Food Standards Agency.
- Children are taught good hygiene procedures.
- Children wash hands in water and soap before meals and snacks and after using the toilet.

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Also after handling animals.

- Children are taught not to pick up food from the floor.
- Food hygiene training has been undertaken by a large number of staff in the setting.

## **Sustainability**

- We reduce the amount of food waste by buying and preparing only the amount of food we need.
- We try to buy as much of our food from local suppliers when in season.
- We only buy sustainable fish.
- We only buy cooking oils that are not made from palm oil.
- We try to buy products with minimal packaging.
- We grow some of our vegetables and herbs for our menus.

## **Protecting Children's health, maintaining a healthy weight**

- Staff are made aware of the Healthy Weight care pathway.
- Staff concerns are raised with their manager and parents.
- Staff will signpost parents to other health care professionals, such as health visitors, dieticians, or registered nutritionists.

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

- We use the Early Years Code of Practice for Food and Drink to evaluate the settings approach to food and drink provision.
- We use the Menu Planning Checklist to evaluate the food and drink provision, particularly when planning new menus.
- We seek to obtain feedback from parents / carers and children about our menus.
- We visit other settings to discuss menus and food and drink for children.
- We are members of a number of sector organisations. We receive a number of press magazines and use the articles on Food and drink to evaluate our food and drink provision.
- Our regular staff supervisions identify staff who need training in food hygiene and other courses supporting the provision of healthy nutritional well balanced menus.
- We use a number of different websites to support the development of our menus, including [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk).
- Our food policy is reviewed annually.