

3.5 Meeting dietary requirements

Aim

This setting regards snack and meal times as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and preferences.

Policy

- Staff discuss and record children's dietary needs, allergies and any ethnic or cultural food preferences with their parents.
- If a child has a known food allergy, procedure 4.4 Allergies and food intolerance is followed.
- Staff record information about each child's dietary needs in the individual child's registration form; parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- Up-to-date information about individual children's dietary needs is displayed so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed.
- Staff ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and cultural or ethnic preferences, as well as their parent's wishes.
- We display a picture snack board menu which is updated daily.
- Staff aim to include food diets from children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Through on-going discussion with parents and research reading by staff, staff 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. Staff take account of this information when providing food and drink.
- Staff provide a vegetarian alternative when meat and fish are offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available to children who require it.
- Where it is not possible to source and provide Halal meat or Kosher food, a vegetarian option is available; this will be discussed and agreed with parents at the time of the child's registration.
- All staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets, allergies and cultural or ethnic food preferences. A child's diet or allergy is never used as a label for the child, they are not made to feel 'singled out' because of their diet, allergy or cultural/ethnic food preferences.
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day. Staff inform children how to obtain the drinking water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- Meal and snack times are organised as social occasions.
- Foods we include for snack are:

- Cereal, bread (toast), crackers, crumpets, bread sticks, pitta bread, naan bread; dips such as humus, cheese, plain yogurt and a variety of fruit vegetables. This info is shared with parents via our website and prospectus.

Packed lunches

- We offer a fridge for perishable contents of packed lunches;
- We inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- Lunches are not to contain nuts.
- We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, 2 portions of fruit or veg, a milk-based deserts such as plain yoghurt and if needed 1 small treat item such as a biscuit or dried fruit bar.
- We encourage parents to ensure children’s drinks are either water or no added sugar juice drink.
- We discourage packed lunches that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.
- All staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.
- We kindly ask parents to avoid using any single-use plastics in children’s lunches wherever possible.
- We refer parent’s to the NHS change 4 life website <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes> which provides advice on easy-to-prepare lunch ideas that kids will love, as well as tips on what else to put in their lunchbox

Children who have anxieties around food and meal times.

- Children are not forced or put under any pressure to eat anything they do not want to.
- Children are allowed to eat their snack and lunch in any order they wish and decide when they have had enough of each food item.
- Staff recognise the signs that a child has had enough and remove uneaten food without comment.
- Children are not made to stay at the table after others have left if they refuse to eat certain items of food.
- Staff work in partnership with parents to support them with children who are showing signs of ‘faddy or fussy eating’ and sign post them to further advice, for example, How to Manage Simple Faddy Eating in Toddlers (Infant & Toddler Forum) <https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/health-and-childcare-professionals/factsheets/>

This policy was adopted by	Sennen and Land’s End Pre-school
On	
Date to be reviewed	
Name of signatory	
Role of signatory	