9. Childcare Practice Procedures

9.6 Snack Times and Mealtimes

Snack times

- A “rolling snack” is prepared before the arrival of the children. Preparation includes ensuring the snack trolley has sufficient plates/cups/jugs etc, making sure there are suitable alternatives for those with allergies/intolerances. All other preparation is encouraged to be done ‘with’ the children to provide more opportunties for learning.
- Self-service is promoted at snack times. Small plastic jugs are provided with a choice of (semi-skimmed) milk or water and a selection of fruit and/or vegetables and a carbohydrate, served to allow of self-selection
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Fruit or raw vegetables such as carrot or cucumber are offered in batons, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing. Bananas and other foods are served in the best way to minimise choking hazards.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- A rolling snack allows children to feed when they are ready. This does not impact on their ‘in the moment’ learning. Children are given warnings as to when snack is closing. Snack is encouraged but is voluntary.
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children’s independence by allowing them to pour drinks, cut fruit, tidy away etc.
- Our snack menu is reviewed regularly to provide ample new experiences as well as old favourites.
- Any dietary requirements are catered for and alternatives provided when applicable
- During an afternoon session, children are offered a drink (milk or water).

Mealtimes

- Tables are cleaned before being laid.
- Table-cloths are used and wiped clean after use

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Children need enough space to open their lunch boxes.
- Similarly to snack time, mealtimes are on a ‘rolling’ basis so learning is not impacted
- Children wash their hands and find their name card and hand it to the adult leading the mealtime.
- We will promote healthy eating habits with the children at mealtimes but allow children freedom of choice when eating from their lunch box. They are not made to eat what they do not like and are encouraged to try new foods.
- Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
- Staff who are eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.
- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another. Staff ensure children with food allergies are supervised effectively to avoid any cross contamination
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- Children are never left unsupervised whilst eating and a Paediatric first aider is always present.
- Recycling ‘bins’ are provided for children to dispose of any rubbish/waste appropriately. They then place their washing up in the designated washing up tub. They pack their lunchbox up and place it on the trolley