

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

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

FOOD AND DRINK POLICY (March 2019)

Policy statement

Riding Mill Outdoor Preschool regards 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. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

Procedures

RMOP follows these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting:

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we ask their parents/carers about the child's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy). We ask parents/carers to record information about the child's dietary needs as part of our registration process and parents sign the completed registration form to confirm that the information they have provided is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents/carers to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up-to-date.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences.
- We display the menus of snacks for parents to view.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - dairy foods
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- We 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/carers 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.
- We 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.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.

- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We 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.
- We 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.
- We inform parents/carers who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
- We give parents/carers 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.

Lunches

We are able to offer a hot, cooked meal at lunchtimes which is provided by Broomhaugh C of E First School. Parents/carers must pay for this in line with the school's own payment procedure. Where parents/carers prefer to provide a packed lunch for their child, we;

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents of whether we have facilities to 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 fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can always provide children with water;
- 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;
- acknowledge that some children may have sensory or other difficulties which may mean their preferred foods may not fall into the 'healthy option' bracket. Where this is the case we will work with parents/carers to ensure the child is encouraged to try new things, whilst being mindful of their overall wellbeing.
- provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; and
- ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.