

FOOD & NUTRITION POLICY

Overall aim of the policy

Sunny Days are accredited by the Early Years Nutrition Partnership (July 2021) and so are very aware of the importance of establishing healthy eating habits within our settings. We are committed to offering healthy, nutritious, and balanced meals and snacks, which meet the individual needs and requirements of the children, and which follow the Nutritional Guidelines for Early Years.

This policy is in place to inform parents and team members about nutrition and food served at Sunny Days. It is in place to help identify and cater for individual food requirements and to promote healthy eating in a relaxed atmosphere. Sunny Days understands that early food experiences have an important effect on adult eating patterns and may influence attitudes to eating. Mealtimes are enjoyable social occasions which provide an opportunity to encourage good communication, skills and language development. Mealtimes are also when children's natural curiosity for exploring new concepts will be extended to introduce new tastes and textures.

Development of the food and nutrition policy and practices

Sunny Days Management and Chef have worked with a Registered Nutritionist from the Early Years Nutrition Partnership to develop healthy nutritious menus and the policies and practices which are in place to support Healthy Eating within Early Years.

With Sunny Days chef's professional experience and knowledge, we are able to ensure that the menu and provision of food within the setting can be delivered to the highest standard through:

- Efficient management of the kitchen environment and infection control procedures
- Knowledge of current nutritional guidelines. This is achieved through regular training and Senior staff undertaking 'Providing a healthy Food Environment in Early Years settings L2
- Liaising with parents, staff and children over individual needs and menu ideas.
- Listening to feedback from children, staff, and parents on menu choices where relevant. Surveys have been and will continue to be sent out periodically to gather feedback on our menus and useful information to support progression and improvement
- Offering dishes which celebrate cultural diversity and festive traditions. Festivals and important days are recognised through providing culturally appropriate food to support learning and development
- Sourcing local fresh produce where possible.

Practices

- Before a child starts at Sunny Days, we talk to parents about their child's dietary needs and preferences, including any food allergies they have and special health requirements. Where appropriate, we carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies to ensure we are clear about risk and action to be taken.
- Allergen data sheets are held on all our dishes and accessible to all staff to ensure all health requirements, allergies and intolerances are adhered to.
- The setting upholds a 'No Nuts' policy across all settings
- Careful consideration will also be given to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child.
- Parents of children who are on special diets will be asked to meet with our Children's Chef to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods. Where children are not eating, discussions will be held between the Manager and family to find suitable alternatives and solutions.
- Our team will show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They would 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.
- A balanced and healthy breakfast, mid-morning snack, lunch and afternoon tea are provided for children attending a full day at the setting – lunch option will vary according to the setting.
- Menus are written in advance and rotated regularly and reflect cultural diversity and variation. These will be displayed on our website and in the main reception area for parental reference.
- We provide nutritious food at all times, avoiding large quantities of fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
- We are happy to celebrate birthdays and special occasions with your children and are happy for a small cake or healthy snack to be bought in. Please check with your manager for information regarding allergies and intolerances.
- Cooking with children is a valuable learning experience across all ages. Where possible this will be a healthy dish or a healthy alternative to something that is considered a less healthy option. On most occasions all cooking undertaken will be sent home with your child
- Menus include a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables each day.
- Fresh drinking water will be constantly available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and babies and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more to keep them hydrated.

- Our team will set a good example and eat with the children and show good table manners. Meal and snack times will be organised so that they are social occasions in which children and our team participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children will be encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation will be encouraged.
- Our team will use mealtimes to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves.
- Any child who shows signs of distressed at being faced with a meal will be sensitively supported and encouraged to try something on their plate. If a child does not finish his or her meal will not be disadvantaged because of this. Children who refuse to eat their food will be supported and gently encouraged to try something on their plate.
- Parents will be informed if their child is not eating well through verbal communications and via the 'Blossom' App
- Children will be given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed.
- Quantities offered, portion sizes, will take account of the ages of the child being catered for.
- We will promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions.
- No child is ever left alone when eating or drinking to minimise the risk of choking.
- All team members that prepare and handle food are competent to do so and received training in food hygiene/safety.
- Where main meals are not provided, advice and guidance will be offered to parents through our website and social media platforms to support healthy choices.

Date of Policy Review:	5 th February 2024	
Date of Final Version:		
Final version signed off by:	Aimee Scadden - Operations Manager	Joy Scadden - Director
Date of Next Review:	5 th February 2025 or sooner if required	
Review to be undertaken by:	Aimee Scadden	