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 Rainbows End Pre-School

 Timebridge Community Centre

 Mobbsbury Way

 Stevenage

 Herts

 SG2 0HT

**Food and Drink**

**Policy Statement**

We regard snacks and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating. At snack time, we aim to provide nutritious food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs.

**Procedures**

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting.

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
* We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
* We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up to date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
* 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, as well as their parents' wishes.
* We plan menus, involving children and parents in the planning where needed.
* We provide nutritious food for snack, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
* We always have fruit at snack.
* We try to include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
* 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 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 provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat is offered.
* 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 snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
* We offer a rolling snack so children can have a snack when they are ready and staff record which children have had for snack.
* We use snack times to help children 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 water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
* We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in our setting.
* We give parents 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.
* For young children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

**Packed Lunches**

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.
* Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk-based desserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice.
* 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.
* Provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups, and cutlery.
* Ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that mealtime is a social occasion.

This policy was adopted by Clair Rivers-Ward