

Policy Title and Number:

Healthy Nutrition Policy

Policy Reference Number: JIC-049

**Legislation that informs this policy**

*The Children Act 1989*

*Early Years Foundation Stage 2017*

*Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006*

*The Microbiological Criteria for Foodstuffs Regulations 2006*

*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 (as amended 2004)*

*Education (Nutritional Standards for School Lunches) (England) Regulations 2006*

*Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*

*Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998*

*Food Labeling Regulations 1996 (as amended)*

*Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)*

*Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992*

*School Standards and Framework Act 1998*

*Education Act 2011*

*Food Safety Act 1990*

*Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974*

**This list is not exhaustive**

Healthy nutrition is essential to the healthy physical and mental development of babies and young children. Not only do newborns need to develop healthy limbs for walking and teeth for talking but, because the skull cannot be fully developed before birth, healthy nutrition is essential to the important post-natal development of the brain.

## Policy Principles

Our Healthy Nutrition Policy is based on three important principles:

- 1. Healthy Nutrition is an essential element in our Curriculum.** At *Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island*, we recognise that Healthy Nutrition has an important complementary role to play alongside Physical and Mental Exercise in the physical and mental development of babies and young children – as do also Music in the development of language, of acoustic learning, and of physical movement skills and Art in the development of the visual perception of shapes and the reading and formation of letters.
- 2. Partnership with parents/carers is a key factor determining the success of our Healthy Nutrition Policy.** Families may differ in the time and resources that they can provide in support of their child's learning at nursery. Where we identify an area for concern with regard to a child's nutritional needs being met, we count on parent's collaboration and consent to seek professional support and advice.
- 3. Food and nutrition are an important part of every family's culture and identity.**

***Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island* therefore recognises the need to:**

- 1 Be responsive to the individual needs of the children and families we serve, ensuring rigorous conformity to any particular dietary requirements that they may have**
- 2 Communicate effectively with parents/carers to promote healthy eating habits consistently both at nursery and at home.**

## Policy Objectives

1. To provide our children with the best possible nutrition at nursery to support their physical and mental development
2. **To adhere strictly to the various particular dietary requirements of individual children.** Parents/carers must inform the Nursery Manager of all their child's dietary requirements relating to food allergies and/or religious requirements, before the child starts attending the nursery. If food allergies are developed after the child's attendance starts, then parents must inform the Nursery Manager as soon as possible, to allow at least one week until an alternative menu can be provided by the nursery. In the meantime, parents and the nursery will work together to ensure the child has an allergen free diet.
3. To develop healthy eating habits among our children and give them the best possible start towards a lifetime of healthy eating. **To this end, to support parents/carers in the development of healthy eating at home and elsewhere outside nursery.**
4. To use occasions for eating and drinking (mealtimes and snack times) to promote a full range of other learning objectives, including the development of:
  - a. Social behaviour skills
  - b. Vocabulary
  - c. Muscular coordination skills
  - d. Counting, subtraction and other numeracy skills
  - e. Knowledge/understanding of the world
5. To promote among our children an understanding and an appreciation of ethnic diversity through the provision to all children (subject to dietary restrictions as mentioned in 2. above) of different foods derived from different ethnic cultures.

## Organisation

Overall responsibility of the *Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island* implementation of our Healthy Nutrition Policy lies with our Healthy Eating Coordinator – Sarah Dennis. More specifically, she is responsible for:

- 1 Ensuring that nursery is appropriately organised to deliver meals and snacks that conform to our Healthy Nutrition Policy and that staff are trained in healthy eating, food safety and hygiene.
- 2 Checking at appropriate intervals that:
  - o Practice standards (set out below) are being maintained
  - o Menus are properly displayed and made available to parents
  - o All the special dietary needs of individual children are appropriately displayed and that all staff are appropriately aware of them.
- 3 Monitoring and controlling the adherence of menus to nutritional guidelines and requirements from time to time and checking the variety of the meals and snacks provided.
- 4 Meeting with individual parents/carers from time to time to review their awareness and appreciation of our Healthy Nutrition Policy.

## Practice Standards

### The eating environment

The environment in which the children eat is an important aspect of learning about food.

Every meal-time is viewed as a social time, where children and adults can talk freely and enjoy trying different foods.

- 1 The children will sit in their key groups with their personal carers and participate in discussions and help to serve the food.
- 2 Children are encouraged to be independent and make their own choices, whilst being supported by adults.
- 3 All rooms are set up with drinks table that children can access to help themselves to water. Snacks are made available at the specific times in the morning and afternoon in buffet style to encourage children's independence. Staffs encourage the children to eat and drink. Withholding food will not be used as a punishment.

Our nursery rooms are multi purpose. To ensure a smooth transition into meal times, the tables will be cleaned and set down with table cloths, placemats and cutlery. Each table will have its own tray consisting of meals in dishes, eating plates and bowls, drinking cups and serviettes, which the children will then help distribute. Older children will come one by one to collect their food and cutleries from the serving trolley (school way)

#### **Meals:**

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners, and will be given plenty of time to eat. Children will also be encouraged to self-select food and will be given plenty of opportunities to do so.

- Children have a small stomach and an under-developed gut and this prevents them from consuming large quantities of food at a time. We therefore provide breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and breaks throughout the day, offering fruit and vegetables with fresh drinking water. Milk or water will be served with morning and afternoon snacks.
- We are particularly mindful of our need to cater for children with special dietary requirements. Before a child's admission, parents are asked explicitly to inform the nursery of any dietary needs so that provision can be made to ensure that their children receive, as far as possible, the same food as everyone else. We encourage children to follow a balanced diet that takes into account the religious and cultural needs of every child.

Breakfast is readily made available on a table in the morning and all children that arrive before 8:30am will be offered carefully selected cereals with the option of toast, crumpets, etc. alongside to give them a choice in what they want to eat. All children are given full fat milk and other dairy products unless this is specifically precluded by their individual dietary requirements.

The Lunch-Time Meal is a variety of delicious meals, that are prepared on site by kitchen cook who is working to guidelines provided by a nutritionist/dietician. These meals are freshly prepared. The selections of foods are varied on a weekly basis to ensure a balanced diet

- 4 We aim to encourage children to try new tastes and flavours and to experience food from other cultures, ensuring that children from all backgrounds encounter familiar tastes but also have the opportunity to try unfamiliar foods.
- 5 Key persons will sit with their children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- 6 Portion sizes and the amounts each child consumes will be monitored carefully by staff.
- 7 Children will still receive a dessert if they refuse the main course and they will be allowed to have second helpings of fruit or milk-based desserts if available.

Afternoon Tea is prepared by cook or nursery staff who have been trained in Healthy Eating and Food Safety and are supported by a key member of staff who has been trained to follow the Early Years Healthy Eating Scheme.

**Milk (formula) for under 1s must be provided by their parents.** *Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island* has all the necessary equipment and knowledge to support parents through the weaning process. Furthermore, we are actively encouraging breastfeeding.

### **Special Occasions:**

At *Just Imagine Day Nursery – Canvey Island*, we celebrate different occasions and festivals as part of our curriculum and as a celebration of the different cultures of the children in our care. When doing so, parents are informed of the celebration and are encouraged to bring food in from home. We provide parents with a list of acceptable healthy foods as options for them to provide.

Each child's birthday is a special day and we like to celebrate each one with celebration foods shared with all the children. We feel it helps parents, when choosing celebration foods to bring in for their child's birthday celebration, to have some guidelines and suggestions as to what we can and what we can't accept for our children to share. Committed as we are to 'Healthy Nutrition', we are concerned to avoid any possible allergic reactions among any of our children and we ask parents to help us on these, and also on other occasions, to not bring in any foods that cannot be sent home. We are happy to send birthday goods home so parents can determine if they want their child to eat them or not. The nursery will provide a cake suitable for all children to which they will have happy birthday sung to them with their peers and staff.

### **Curriculum:**

Our curriculum emphasises the need for children to learn about being healthy and about the importance of healthy eating to their health and general well-being. To ensure that children receive a variety of experiences at nursery, we undertake regular cooking and baking activities as part of planned themes such as festivals and celebrations. In addition to these activities, children are often involved in preparing their own daily snacks using fresh ingredients.

### **Provision for Staff**

All staff are required to set a good example to the children by only consuming suitable food and drink whilst in their presence or on the premises.

- 1 Staff are encouraged to eat with the children to set a good example and be a role model.
- 2 A separate area will be available for staff to prepare their own food in their lunch breaks. Nursery food may be available for them to eat while sitting with children at lunch time, after ensuring that their children have had the appropriate portions.
- 3 Fresh drinking water is available for staff both in the nursery rooms and in the staff area.
- 4 All staff are given 'healthy eating' training.

### **Parents:**

- 1 The weekly breakfast, snack and lunch menus will be on display for parents a week in advance and copies will be available to them upon request.
- 2 Parents/carers will be advised promptly if their child is not eating well.
- 3 Parents of children who are on special diets will be asked to provide as much written information as possible about this as well as a GP's note. An allergy management plan is created and displayed in the food area to ensure permanent and supply staff and students are aware of each individual child's needs.
- 4 If there is any issue concerning children's eating that we may not be able to help with, we will recommend the services of Early Start Community Nutrition Service.

**Date updated: August 2021**

**Date for review: August 2022**

**Links to other policies:** Food Safety Policy, Meal time Routines, Settling in Policy