FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY

Introduction

Over Kellet Playgroup is committed to providing healthy, balanced, and nutritious snacks and drinks to support the wellbeing, growth and development of all children, in line with the EYFS requirement. We follow the DfE's EYFS Nutritional Guidance and abide by the EYFS (September 2025) Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements which now include "Safer Eating" rules specifying requirements around paediatric first aid, allergy management, choking prevention and safe meal supervision.

Aims

- To enable healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes.
- To provide healthy, balanced, and nutritious food/drink choices throughout the day (or time children are in the setting) and ensure any food brought in from home compliments this.
- To ensure that all aspects of food and drink promote the health and well-being of the children, staff, and visitors to our setting.
- To ensure food is nutritionally appropriate to the age/stage of each child.

Method

We follow the procedures below to promote healthy eating in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies and intolerances. Risk assessments are put in place prior to child starting, where necessary.
- We record information about each child's dietary needs on their registration record and parents sign the record 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/intolerances - are up to date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs in the kitchen and main Playgroup cupboard, so that all 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 provide nutritious food at all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.

- We 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 require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff 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 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.
- To protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide semi-skimmed pasteurised milk.
- We ensure that children are supervised at mealtimes and that children are within sight and hearing of a member of staff, who is Paediatric First aid trained, at all times.
- We follow the main advice on dietary guidelines and the legal requirements for identifying food allergens.
- Foods provided by the setting for children have any allergenic ingredients identified and recorded on the allergy chart.
- Care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies and intolerances do not have contact with food products that they are allergic to.
- We notify Ofsted of any food poisoning affecting two or more children in our care as soon as possible and at least within 14 days.
- If a child chokes at mealtime and intervention is given, we record details of the incident and ensure that parents/carers are informed.
- Staff responsible for the preparation and handling of food are required to have completed a level 2 food hygiene as soon as possible. (Certificates for this can be found in the Kitchen Food Safety folder).

Packed lunches

We do not provide cooked meals and children are required to bring a packed lunch. We encourage parents and carers to provide children with packed lunches that complement our healthy food ethos. We direct parents to the “Change 4 Life” website that includes ideas for healthy packed lunches.

- We advise parents to use insulated lunch boxes with 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 creme fraiche. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk.
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits.

- can provide children bringing packed lunches with plates and cups and cutlery if required.
- ensure a Paediatric first aid trained member of staff sits with the children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a safe but social occasion.

Allergies / Preferences

We are a nut free setting and parents are made aware of this on the registration form, on visits to the setting and through reminders on newsletters. This is to protect any child or adult who attends who may have a severe allergy to nuts. We obtain necessary information from parents in advance of a child being admitted to the provision, including: the child's special dietary requirements, preferences, or food allergies. Written parental permission will be requested at the time of the child's admission to the provision, regarding the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future. All practitioners are fully aware of children who may have allergies. All practitioners must complete an Allergy Awareness Course as soon as possible. (Certificates for this can be found in the Kitchen Food Safety folder).

Special Diets- Medical

We recognise that some children may require special diets. In this case parents/carers are asked to make us fully aware of this. Individual care plans need to be created for children with special dietary needs/requirements. These should document symptoms and adverse reactions, actions to be taken in an emergency, and emergency contact details, along with any particular food requirements e.g., for high-energy diets, allergies.

Food Safety- Milk and Food

Appropriate food safety precautions are taken when milk/food is prepared or stored. These vary depending on the food on offer and include:

- ensuring that adequate storage and washing facilities are available.
- that food handlers undergo appropriate food safety and hygiene training.
- and that suitable equipment and protective clothing are available.
- Any food safety hazards are identified and controlled.
- Information is cascaded to everyone who is involved with food related activities in the setting.
- We have food safety information displayed in the appropriate areas.
- Food hygiene matters should be included in staff inductions and on-the-job training and available to all staff.

The Food and Eating Environment

Playgroup provides a clean, sociable environment for children to eat their meals. Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat. At every table there will be a member of staff to help support the children while they eat and will provide a good role model for healthy eating. Staff will help to ensure a safe, enjoyable experience at meal/snack times and will be able to encourage healthy

eating. Parents/carers will be informed if their child is not eating well, at hand overs at the end of the child's sessions. We will equip our children with the knowledge, understanding and skills that enable them to make the sort of choices that lead to a healthy lifestyle and develop to their full potential. In our setting children will be provided with a range of opportunities to learn about food and make healthier food and drink choices. They take part in cooking activities that are linked to the learning experiences given within the setting.

Our food, eating environment, activities and ethos aim to:

- promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and drinking.
- present consistent, informed healthy eating messages.
- support and encourage good table manners and social eating skills.
- provide a good role model by having carers sit with children while they eat.
- encourage children to exercise healthy choices with regards to eating and drinking
- have supportive staff who encourage children to observe the social rituals of mealtimes including the use of 'please' and 'thank you'.
- work with parents/carers around the provision of healthy food and drinks by making healthy eating information available such as leaflets, posters, policies, and websites.

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to any significant changes in legislation or practice. The policy will be updated accordingly, and staff will be informed of any changes.