



Nutrition policy

- **Policy statement**

- This nutrition policy has been introduced to ensure that the children that attend our setting are offered healthy food and drink options in accordance with the Bedfordshire “Under 5 Healthy Eating Award” guidelines. We feel it is important that from an early age children develop good, healthy eating habits and are encouraged to try a wide variety of foods.

- **Menu's & Snacks for children**

Downside Childrens Preschool will buy and prepare snacks for their sessions and use a 4 weekly rotation menu to vary the food. The lunch time meals are provided by Downside Primary school.

- The snack will be displayed at each session on our notice board as parents drop and collect their children.
- The snack aims to provide healthy, nutritious food to encourage healthy eating habits, and to encourage children to try new and unusual tastes.
- Cultural or personal food beliefs will be handled with respect and sensitivity by children's centre staff, and parents/carers opinions will be taken into account when planning future menus.
- Parents will be asked to disclose whether their child has any allergies or special dietary needs when registering their child at the provision.
- Parent's views and ideas about snack will be welcomed. A comments/ suggestions snack time wallet will be on display on our notice board.
- Parents of children who are on special diets will be encouraged to provide alternative healthy snacks for their children.
- Parents of children that prefer to bring in their own snacks will be given a list of healthy options.

- **Mealtimes**

- Meals will be served at appropriately sized tables and chairs with child size bowls, plates and cutlery.
- Children will be encouraged to try new and varied food and given the opportunity to help themselves to more from the platters provided.
- Children will be taken over to the bathroom sinks and hand washing will be encouraged before mealtimes and snack time always.
- Children will be given enough time to eat their food, however no longer than 30-40 minutes is encouraged as an appropriate time for children to finish a meal.
- Children will be encouraged to try new and varied food and given the opportunity to help themselves to more from the platters provided.
- During mealtimes staff will act as good role models for the children displaying healthy eating habits.

- **Mealtime Behaviour**

- Children will be encouraged to remain at the table whilst eating by Downside preschool staff.
- Staff will be encouraged to sit and eat their lunch with children while they eat and provide a good role model for healthy eating.
- Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and will be given plenty of time to eat.
- If a child refuses to eat a food the children centre staff are responsible for deciding how to handle this refusal in an appropriate manner. We would offer support to them as appropriate, encouraging a positive attitude.
- Staff will include all children at snack and meal times regardless of their behaviour throughout the session. Food will never be withheld under any circumstances.
- Staff will not use food as a reward for “good” behaviour and all children will be offered an equal opportunity for food and drinks.

Packed Lunches

- As part of the 'Healthy eating' guidelines set by Family Food First programme, we encourage parents bringing packed lunches to our setting to make sure they provide a healthy and balanced lunch.
- That means foods that contain the nutrients that children need, and fewer high in sugar and saturated fat.
- A healthy packed lunch should contain a mix of foods from the following:-
- Starchy foods-these are bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and others
- Protein foods – including meat, fish, eggs, beans, and others
- A dairy item – this could be cheese or yoghurt
- Vegetable or salad and a portion of fruit
- Unhealthy snacks such as crisps, chocolates, cakes and biscuits are discouraged within our setting. If these foods are included in the packed lunch we will remove them and return to you at the end of the day.
- It may take a while for your child to get used to a healthier packed lunch. But it will be worth it for their health, so please keep trying.
- If you are finding it challenging to provide a healthy packed lunch, we will arrange a meeting with you to discuss appropriate packed lunch options.
- You can find lots of ideas for healthy lunches at [Change4Life: healthy lunchbox ideas](#).

• **Drinks**

- Drinks will be available throughout sessions for children.
- Drinks will also be available at meal and snack times.
- Only milk and water will be available under either circumstance.
- Drinks will be offered in either open top plastic cups or open top “doidy” cups to encourage young children to drink from an open top cup.

• **Education Linked**

- The Family food first team provide the setting with learning outcomes in the following areas; nutrition, oral health and physical activity.

- During sessions we will invite oral health professionals and dietary professionals to visit and offer advice and education to parents/carers and children.
- Sessions will also incorporate oral health based activities, such as role play areas set up as a dentist, tooth cleaning on a model all which would be part of Smile Month. Food will be grown in the setting with the children such as cress, tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables which can be eaten as part of their snack.
- Mealtimes will be used as an opportunity to talk to children about “healthy” foods and drinks.
- Sessions will be used to offer “food tasting” opportunities such as fruit and vegetable tasting sessions.
- If sweet foods are made during sessions, staff will hand those out at the end of the session informing parents/carers of appropriate times – such as after a main meal.
- We offer messy play activities with food to enable children to explore the texture of different foods.
- We provide information leaflets for parents.
- We also have an information board, which gives information on healthy snacks, nutritional menus and the nutrition and benefits of fruits.

- **Celebrations**

- Downside preschool asks that when a child wishes to celebrate a birthday with a food treat that they provide a healthy alternative to a birthday cake; such as a box of strawberries or some fruit with yoghurt.
- During home visits and on the snack display board, parents are informed about our celebrations policy mainly in regards to birthdays.
- Should parents wish to provide a cake for their child’s birthday, they are asked to bring a cake made of fruit. Or staff can display the fruit as a cake and place candles on top. This would be a healthy alternative to a cake.

- To celebrate birthdays we will incorporate the “Happy Birthday” song, into our sessions for children to feel that we are recognising their special day. At the end of the session they will be given a balloon and a birthday card made by their peers.
- To celebrate special occasions and festivals, such as Chinese New Year, Christmas, Eid, Diwali, etc, we will vary our normal snack menu to include healthy themed snacks and meals to give children a good opportunity to taste foods from other cultures.
- **Health and Hygiene**
 - Children are expected to wash their hands before handling food and before all meals or snacks are served.
 - Children are also expected to wash their hands after using the toilet facilities; it is the key person’s responsibility to make this part of the children’s routine.
 - Animals are not invited into our settings at this time to ensure hygiene is maintained.
 - Where possible, children will be encouraged to play outside, and during the summer months we will offer outdoor eating opportunities such as community picnics. This will encourage exposure to sunlight and help with vitamin D production.
- **Breastfeeding:**
 - We feel that breastfeeding mothers need privacy while breastfeeding their baby so we have arranged a room, for mothers who are breastfeeding their baby whilst settling their children in at our setting.
- **National health initiative:**
 - We promote national health initiatives by handing out leaflets and putting up posters. We also give information verbally to parents and advice so they could maintain a healthy life style.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Downside Children’s Pre-school held on _____

Signed on behalf of Downside Pre-school
 by: _____

