**Mucky Pups Preschool**

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**Food and Healthy Eating policy**

**Aim**

*“Children’s early years provide an important foundation for their future health and strongly influence many aspects of well-being. The food children eat in their earliest years shapes their future health - their tastes and eating habits formed early in life can have consequences for growth, development, health and academic achievement in later life.” Children’s Food Trust Survey (Dec2015)*

*At Mucky Pups Pre-School, we believe that sharing and enjoying healthy food and drink is an important aspect of the wellbeing and development of children.*

*We aim to promote an enjoyment of food as well as encouraging healthy eating and healthy life style choices. We believe that equipping children with the ability to make healthy choices at a young age will help equip them with the knowledge to do so later in their lives.*

We aim to do this by:

**Adult Role**

Adults have a key role in influencing children’s attitudes and choices.

At Mucky Pups adults seek to:

* Be a positive role model; provide an opportunity for children to learn about food, food sources, nutrition, health, seasons and growing cycles and other people’s ways of life.
* Talk about the important role that food plays in holidays and celebrations
* Promote the concept that mealtime is not only for eating, but also for learning and socialising
* Sitting with children at snack times and discussing the types of foods we are eating and making meal times a sociable relaxed time.
* Eat alongside children and encourage them to taste new and different foods
* Support children with special needs when eating
* Teach table manners—being seated when eating, saying please and thank you, not talking with food in their mouths, giving time for eating
* Encouraging health and safety when preparing and eating food, use of tools, hand washing etc
* Encourage children to adopt hygienic routines regarding food and food preparation, for example, children are made aware of the importance of good hand washing prior to eating and cleaning up after meal times.
* Encouraging children where possible to at least try foods they are given but never forcing a child to eat anything they do not want to.

**Snack Room**

Our “café” provides the opportunity for children to be involved in the preparation and eating of healthy food. We use the Café space to introduce food from other cultures and celebrate festivals and special events.

* Ensuring that all foods supplied by the setting are healthy, nutritious, avoid high levels of fat, sugar, salt colourings and preservatives.
* Ensuring that children have access to fresh drinking water at all times and can access this as and when they need. We will also ensure that children are reminded of the importance of drinking plenty of fluids, especially in hot weather.
* Children are involved with preparing healthy snacks at the start of each session through a carefully planned learning intention.
* Staff consider the needs of the current children and will focus the learning on specific food types, history of food and food from other cultures and traditional foods. The children will also experience the history of food, specific food types, food from other cultures and traditional foods.
* Children may also serve their peers and are encouraged to discuss healthy eating and practices with them, i.e. asking if they have washed their hands. Information about the learning intention can be found in the café area journal.
* Children are encouraged to be dependent in making choices about their diet and pouring their drinks themselves (this consists of milk and water).
* We offer our children a healthy, nutritious and balanced diet daily in our café.
* Information for parents on the food provided to children is displayed daily on the café board. A selection of snacks is offered in order to encourage children to be independent in making choices about their diet.

**Outdoors**

Our outdoor space enables us to grow herbs, fruit and vegetables.

* Children, are involved, where possible with the planting, growing and preparation of food,
* Children learn about the seasons and seasonal food
* Children can taste, smell, touch and look at the different stages of growth
* Children learn how to care and tend for their food

**Trips**

* Children are involved in writing lists and shopping for food
* Children go on regular trips to the supermarket or market and local shops in Lancaster to buy and prepare food for their snacks and celebrations

**Involving Parents/Carers**

Mucky Pups is committed to working in partnership with parents. We make sure that parents are made aware of our commitment to promoting healthy, varied and enjoyable food.

* Snack menus are made available to parents with our planning and we find out about special diets/allergies during our Induction Programme.
* Parents are consulted and asked to contribute with us to celebrate festivals that are part of our children’s family life and the food that is part of that celebration.
* All children’s dietary needs are discussed with parents and fully understood before a child starts at the setting. This will include asking about allergies, dietary needs and religious requirements. (This is initially provided on the child’s registration form but will be discussed further with a member of staff should any specific needs be listed) An allergy traffic light poster is displayed in the snack room.
* Parents are made aware of our clear and robust packed lunch policy and we provide parents with information regarding lunchbox contents through leaflets, newsfeeds on famly and information on our website linking useful pages to guide them.

**Celebrations and Rewards**

• Staff are encouraged to be innovative in the way birthdays and festivals are celebrated, e.g. without the use of foods high in sugar and salt.

• Parents are discouraged from bringing ‘party bags’ or a birthday cake into the nursery to celebrate their child’s birthday and make them feel special in other ways, eg: by singing happy birthday and sending them home with a birthday certificate.

• Parents/carers will be consulted over appropriate ways to celebrate ethnic/cultural and religious occasions.

Date policy adopted on:2nd September 2023 Date for review: 2nd September 2024

Signed: J E Wills Position: Manager