Food and Drink Policy

Statement of Intent

At Hellingly Preschool, we promote healthy eating and positive attitudes towards food and drink. We recognise that a well-balanced diet and good hydration are essential for children's growth, development, and wellbeing. Our aim is to provide nutritious snacks, encourage independence, and create opportunities for children to learn about food in a safe, enjoyable, and inclusive way.

Aims

- To offer a balanced and varied range of healthy snacks and drinks.
- To encourage children to make healthy choices and develop independence during mealtimes.
- To ensure that all food provided meets individual dietary needs, allergies, and cultural or religious requirements.
- To promote children's understanding of where food comes from and how it supports a healthy lifestyle.

Snack Time

- We operate a **rolling snack system** between **10:00am and 11:00am**, allowing children to choose when to have their snack so that play and learning are not interrupted.
- A **member of staff** is responsible for purchasing and monitoring food supplies each week, ensuring fresh produce is used and stocks are replenished when needed.
- We offer a **rotating variety of fruit, vegetables, dairy products, and carbohydrates**, providing balanced and nutritious options.
- We sometimes include foods from other cultures or linked to celebrations and topics of interest (e.g. noodles for Chinese New Year or pitta bread during cultural weeks).
- We **do not offer dried fruits**, as these contain high levels of natural sugar.

Allergies and Dietary Needs

- The preschool maintains a clear **allergens chart** and **individual allergy list**, displayed for staff reference.
- All allergies and dietary needs are recorded on the child's registration form and reviewed regularly with parents and carers.
- Separate utensils, chopping boards, and preparation areas are used to prevent cross-contamination.

- Children with allergies are always supervised closely during snack and mealtimes.

Lunch Provision

- Children staying for lunch are asked to bring a **healthy packed lunch** from home.
- We encourage balanced lunches and discourage chocolate, sweets, or fizzy drinks.
- Please see our **Lunchbox Policy** for detailed guidance on healthy lunch options.

Food Activities and Cookery

- Children regularly participate in **cookery sessions**, supporting fine motor skills, mathematical development, and understanding of healthy choices.
- Recipes are selected with the children and use **fresh, healthy ingredients** wherever possible.
- When sweet items are prepared, this is done in moderation and as part of a balanced approach.
- We occasionally use food-based resources (such as lentils or cereals) in sensory trays and ensure these are handled safely and hygienically.

Drinks and Hydration

- Children are provided with **fresh milk** or **water**.
- All children under five are entitled to **one-third of a pint of milk daily**, funded by the government.
- We have a **no juice policy**.
- Children are encouraged to **pour their own drinks** from small jugs, promoting independence and self-care.
- Water is freely available throughout every session, both indoors and outdoors.

Healthy Eating Initiatives

- Hellingly Preschool takes part in the **Phunky Foods healthy eating programme** and the **Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA)** scheme.
- We follow the **Safer Food, Better Business** guidelines and maintain food hygiene standards in line with Environmental Health requirements.
- Regular checks are completed for food storage, preparation, and cleaning routines.

Partnership with Parents

We welcome suggestions from parents and carers regarding food and drink provision. Staff are available to discuss any dietary concerns or preferences, ensuring that every child's needs are met sensitively and effectively.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if new guidance or legislation is introduced. Staff training, environmental health feedback, and parental input inform regular updates.

- **Last Reviewed:** 1.09.25
- **Next Review Due:** 1.09.26
- **Approved By:** Sara Sherrard