

09 Early years practice procedures

**09.8 Snack-times and mealtimes**

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

**Snack times**

* A ‘snack’ is prepared mid-morning and is organised as a snack bar to support the child’s independence.
* Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
* Children wash their hands before snack-time.
* Children are offered semi-skimmed milk as a main drink.
* Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds, but are sliced to minimise a choking hazard.
* Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
* Biscuits and cakes are offered as a treat especially when it’s a birthday or celebration. Most of the time items such as brioche, toast, rice cakes and crackers are offered.
* Children arrive as they want refreshment and leave when they have had enough. Children are not made to leave their play if they do not want to have a snack.
* Staff join in conversation and encourage children’s independence by allowing them to pour drinks, butter toast, cut fruit etc.

**Mealtimes**

* Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
* Children help staff set tables.
* Children wash their hands.
* Their lunch boxes are kept on the lunch box trolley and the children will collect their own lunch box and find a seat at a table.
* Children are encouraged to open their own lunch boxes and choose their growing food first.
* Staff have their lunch with the children.
* Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults’ tasks and breaks.
* In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swopping their food with one another.
* Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
* After lunch children are encouraged to put their lunch boxes back on the trolley.
* Information for parents is displayed on the parent’s notice board, including:
* Ten Steps for Healthy Toddlers <https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR_toddler_booklet_green.pdf>

Signed …**Vicky Oliver**………………. Position ………Manager………………………………….

Date ……4th September 2023…………………………….