**78 Food Policy**

St James’ Pre-School aims to promote the health and well being of children and their families and the staff at the setting through the information and activities provided. We aim to provide an inclusive welcoming environment for all. Please also refer to Policy 8 Nutrition at Snack Times and Policy 10 Allergies and Allergic Reaction Policy. All staff have completed and regularly update Paediatric First Aid training and Level 2 award in Food Safety in Early Years. Please refer to Policy 9 Food Preparation Procedure.

Our settings overall aim links to the EYFS requirements including the welfare requirements for food and drink, and we provide a nutritious snack following the Children’s Food Trust Guidance.

The policy applies to:-

* Food and drink provided at our setting
* All staff at the setting who prepare, cook and serve food
* Families who send in food from home
* The policy is shared with staff and parents

As a sessional pre-school, a mid-morning snack is provided. Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the session. Milk and water are offered at snack time. Children are encouraged to serve themselves e.g. pouring their own drinks.

At snack time we regularly offer small amounts of new foods to encourage healthy choices. We have a 2-week menu cycle which also includes any seasonal changes. A notice is displayed at the main entrance, informing parents of snack of the day. A sample menu is also available to view on our website.

Families are encouraged to share information about mealtimes and dietary requirements before their children start at the setting. This information is provided in the All About Me section of our Welcome Pack. Government and NHS guidelines are available for families to view on our web page Healthy Happy Me. Families can also share a healthy snack with Travelling Ted.

Snack is a social experience and children and staff are able to sit together between 10.15 and 11.00 to share a healthy snack. By sitting together, the children are more likely to get involved helping and serving themselves or trying new food. Portion sizes are age appropriate and they are encouraged to serve themselves. The children also help setting the tables, washing hands and clearing up after snack. Children are free to leave the table whenever they have finished and can carry on with activities in the room. Adults and children wash hands before snack time and mobile sinks are available throughout.

Only water and milk are offered to drink (juice etc., can lead to tooth decay.) Our menu includes foods from all relevant food groups in correct portions in relation to a snack e.g. crackers bread sticks (starchy foods) apples, bananas, carrot sticks, cucumber (fruit and vegetables) and occasionally dairy (yoghurt or cheese) See Policy 8 Nutrition at Snack Times.

Food and drink often play an important role at special occasions and events. These occasions are also useful to provide opportunities for children to learn about food and drink from different religions or cultures. We do celebrate special occasions and keep foods that are high in sugar or fat as small occasional treats. When celebrating a child’s birthday, families will often provide treats to be shared with the children. These will not be served at the setting but are sent home for parents to decide if and when they can be eaten.

All children are encouraged to take part in snack time but are not pressured. Small portions are offered so they do not feel overwhelmed. Regular opportunities are given to try new foods and staff sit with children to role model making healthy choices and try these foods positively together. Children are praised for trying new food even if they don’t like it. We regularly repeat these new foods as taste buds often change. Successful foods can be added to a more permanent menu.

As a morning only session, generally food is not brought in from home. In some cases, younger children are sent in with their own cup/bottle and we ask that they only contain water. If birthday sweets or cakes are brought in, these are sent home for parents to decide if and when they will be eaten. Staff are also encouraged to only eat the same food as the children and to avoid unhealthy snacks.

Learning about and through food:-

* Personal, social and emotional development: snack time allows for children to share different experiences, taste different foods and take part in activities such as preparing snack, clearing away and sorting utensils.
* Physical development: by helping clear away snack and serving themselves and using child sized utensils children are developing their fine motor skills, snack time also helps children to make healthy choices.
* Literacy: language can be used to describe different foods, smell, texture and taste.
* Mathematics: children are encouraged to sort their dishes at the end of snack time. They count out how many scoops or how many pieces of fruit when serving themselves. They can count how many cups/plates are needed.
* Communication and language: children often talk about their families and favourite foods developing social skills.
* Understanding the world: when children are taking part in a food activity they can learn about where their food comes from and how it grows.
* Expressive arts and design: food can encourage children to talk about pattern, colour and shape.

At times children may prepare food and this can be a planned activity or part of a celebration. In most cases, this food will be sent home unless it is part of that day’s snack. Children will be supervised at all times.

All food is prepared and stored in a safe and hygienic environment. Children are regularly reminded about the importance of hand washing at meal times and after using the toilet. Mobile sinks are available in the room throughout the session.

It is important to us to protect children’s health at our setting. All children in the 2-year room will have a 2-year check completed by their key person. If we have any concerns, parents are signposted to the relevant agencies. We promote regular physical activity during our morning session and our website includes suggestions of activities that can be enjoyed at home. It is important to minimise sedentary behaviour so children are encouraged to move and have access to outdoors during the session. Our website includes links for parents with information regarding healthy food, portion sizes, recommended physical activity and dental health. Parents are welcome to share any concerns with their child’s key person.

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| This policy was adopted on | 28.05.19 |
| Signed on behalf of the pre-school | D Nichols (Manager)/K Palin (PANCo) |
| Policy reviewed and amended on | 28.05.19 |