

Child Side School Nutrition, Health and Hygiene Policy:

Rationale: Food preparation and consumption is an integral part of the Child Side learning Curriculum and encompasses BPEA 5 As of learning, in particular active and authentic learning. It also embeds communication skills and cross curricula priorities such as Sustainability (NC) and aspects of science, in particular Biology- Life and Living, as well skills and concepts of the Physical and Health curriculum, in particular healthy choices and risk management. It enables children to develop life skills, engage with living books (kitchen garden programme) and enhance their sense of appreciation, gratitude regarding the enormous time, energy and resources that go into food production from paddock to plate- the industries involved, the ethics of food production/distribution/commodity market, economics, budgeting and clean-up. It enables children to have authentic ‘voice and choice’, being part of the whole process, including reasoned decision making regarding menus, time management, organisation and food preferences with seasonal availability.

Menus are set with children in the middle years and teams become responsible for set lunches with increasing independence being the long term aim. This means that food preparation has to remain within their capabilities, budget and time allocation. Children always have a limited healthy range of food options.

Baking and ‘high interest/party’ food maybe incorporated into sessions, integrated through curriculum areas or for special festivities and events. Handmade cakes, biscuits, slices etc and birthday cakes (made at home and shared at school as personal family preference) will be encouraged to be as colour, preservative and decorative free as possible.

Specialised needs: Children plan, create and organise simple, wholesome food as part of the curriculum and anything that is required outside of what is on offer will need to be a personal parent responsibility *in consultation with staff*, so that we do not end up in a situation where a significant proportion of children are bringing food into school from home for a variety of reasons. Due to time, organisation and budget constraints, staff and children chefs are unable to provide different food choices outside of the regular menu.

Children with *medical needs* that require specialised food choices (such as diabetes or anaphylaxis related to food), will require **medical certificates** and their parents will be responsible for providing for any specific needs/information/updates in regular consultation with an allocated, dedicated staff member. Documentation, in the form of the required medical management plan, will need to be displayed in all food preparation areas and all staff will be updated at staff dialogues.

- Child Side School proposes not to have a canteen which regularly sells children food, as this can be open to ‘mixed’ messages by offering children ‘fast food’ which is not in the best interest of their long-term health. Even if ‘healthy’ food is offered alongside ‘junk/party’ food, research and experience and common sense shows that children mostly choose the latter.

- Children will be part of the daily rhythm of preparing food and being part of the ‘story’ of food (growing, shopping, cooking, cleaning up...). Each class will endeavour to have its own food preparation area to ensure that it becomes part of the children’s regular curriculum (not just fortnightly or special occasions.) Time will need to be allocated daily so that adults and children can work together in a regular authentic learning experience.
- Children will be offered books/viewing on food production, how our bodies work and other related concepts and they will be encouraged to ponder the ‘story’ of food, without adults ‘telling’ them. Relevant excursions into the community will be explored relating to food, growth, health, hygiene, clean water... We intend to endeavour to have a herb and vegetable garden growing for harvest by the children.
- Health and hygiene will form integral parts of preparing and eating meals together. Children will discuss hygiene and health and have demonstrations as they work preparing meals. Adults will model and make obvious to children how often they wash their hands, use colour-coded clothes for cleaning, put rubbish in the bin, keep away from hot drinks/stove....
- Children and adults will share a meal and conversations as part of the curriculum together over lunch in comfortable conditions in a more home-like arrangement. Eating together will become part of the ‘Slow Food Culture’ as opposed to fast food (there is a deliberate movement known as the ‘Slow Food Movement’ which has started in Europe, ‘Slow Schools’ founded by Maurice Holt are also part of this movement and the approach is to slow things down and value them.)
- Parents will be encouraged to help children and staff care for the vegetable garden and prepare food and clean up where possible. Parents are welcome to share occasional meals with their children once they have informed staff to ensure extra is prepared – budget constraints limit the number of extra meals school can provide. .
- All children will have access to drinking water through personal water bottles supplied from home (and cleaned at home) and kept in the fridge or children’s bags. Water will be the only drinking option available to children unless there is a special occasion or a related ‘food/cultural’ learning experience. Adults will endeavour to encourage and remind children to drink regularly, especially in hot weather.

Reviewed June 2011 – ratified by COM on 10/8/2011

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