**St Joseph’s Pre-school Playgroup**

**Healthy Eating policy**

**Statement of intent**

To help ensure that children have a healthy diet in the Early Years as good nutrition is essential for mental and physical development in childhood

**Aim**

* To provide nutritious, tasty food, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and encourages patterns of eating which will help children to be and stay healthy into adulthood.
* To support parents in creating and sustaining healthy eating habits in their children

**Methods**

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies.
* We store information from parents/carers about each child's allergies and dietary needs in the child’s personal record. All staff are informed of this information and alerted to any potential issues. We have an allergy and dietary requirements chart on display in the kitchen area at all times.
* We provide nutritious snacks at 10.30am and 2.45pm, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings and including a mixture of white and wholemeal flour and fresh fruit. We consult with other professionals when devising menus and attend training as appropriate
* The morning and afternoon snacks are a ‘sit-down’ snack with all children expected to join the group, with support from an adult where required
* We follow guidelines set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage
* We include snacks from around the world as a matter of course such as different types of bread
* Each morning we choose a Snack Monitor who can select which savoury snacks and fruit we will offer that day, from a selection of healthy alternatives.
* The Snack Monitor helps go through the days of the week and do some counting/reciting numbers 1 to 10 every day. We sometimes learn the days of the week in different community languages. The children’s placemats have Makaton symbols on them and we draw attention to these to reinforce good behaviour.
* We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's dietary requirements and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
* Where relevant we provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
* We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children; parents need to provide a water bottle clearly labelled with the child’s name which we will fill with fresh water each day
* We provide drinks of milk or water at snack and lunchtime.
* If children are staying all day, parents will need to provide a packed lunch or purchase one of our packed lunches at an additional cost. We have lunch at around 12.15 each day. We have ‘healthy eating guidelines’, offering suggestions for what to put in children’s packed lunches and a list of items which we feel are unsuitable such as chocolate, sweets and fizzy drinks. If these items are found in a child’s lunchbox, we put them back in the box and explain to the child they can have it at home. We remind the parents at the end of the day of our guidelines.
* Parents need to provide an ice-pack (when the weather is hot) with their child’s lunch in order to keep food safe to consume
* The setting’s packed lunches are made freshly on the premises. We have a ‘Healthy Choice Award’ from Brighton and Hove City Council which is renewed as required.
* Each lunchtime the children having a pre-school lunch are consulted about what they would like, from a range of healthy choices within the main food groups.
* Parents can ask Key People if they are concerned about how much and what their child has eaten on a particular day
* We signpost parents via our website to organisations which promote healthy eating and good dental health
* At least one member of staff holds a Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate
* At least two members of staff sit at the table with children at lunchtime and interact. Staff bring healthy food to eat for their own lunch too. This is a great time to talk about children’s interests, promote healthy eating and generally enjoy each other’s company
* We sometimes grow herbs which the children have an opportunity to smell and taste
* We have food tasting sessions linked to celebrations of different religious and cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year and Diwali
* When we do a cooking activity. which involve the use of ‘unhealthy’ foods such as chocolate, we inform parents and talk to the children about how it is nice to have treats sometimes but not regularly. We explain the impact of frequent consumption of sugary foods and drinks on their teeth and bodies.
* Parents may bring in a cake, candles and serviettes if it is their child’s birthday and we will sing happy birthday and help blow the candles out at snack time. Children may be given a very small piece of cake after their snack or a small piece of cake will be wrapped in a serviette and sent home with each child. If a child with allergies is in attendance, we try to offer an alternative ‘treat’ suitable for them.
* We plan activities to promote oral health care and have a selection of books to support this work.

Signed on behalf of St Joseph’s Pre-school Playgroup Limited:

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Name: Mandy Morgan

Role: Manager

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