Little Monsters Day Nursery

Food and Drink Policy

1. Policy Statement

Little Monsters Day Nursery recognises that snack and meal times are an important part of the day. Mealtimes are social occasions where children:

- Develop healthy eating habits.
- Learn about different foods and cultural practices.
- Build social and independence skills, such as serving themselves and making food choices.

We are committed to providing nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate food for all children, in line with the **EYFS statutory framework** and **National Standards for Day Care on Food and Drink (Standard 8)**

2. Aims

Our aims are to:

1. Provide meals and snacks that meet children's individual dietary requirements and preferences.
2. Promote healthy eating habits from an early age.
3. Ensure food provision complies with dietary, religious, cultural, and allergy needs.
4. Make mealtimes social, inclusive, and educational experiences.
5. Provide clear information and guidance to parents on food and drink provision.

3. Procedures

Dietary Needs and Allergies

- Parents provide information on their child's dietary needs, allergies, and preferences before starting.
- Records are kept in each child's registration form and signed by parents.
- Staff regularly update dietary records with parents to ensure accuracy.
- Current dietary information is displayed for staff awareness, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Children only receive food and drink that complies with their dietary requirements and parents' wishes.
- Staff are trained to manage allergies and dietary restrictions sensitively, ensuring no child feels singled out.

Menu Planning and Nutrition

- Menus are planned, involving children and parents where possible.
- Menus are displayed for parent information.
- Meals and snacks:
    - Include foods from the four main food groups: protein, dairy, grains/cereals/starchy vegetables, and fruit/vegetables.
    - Avoid large amounts of saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives, and colourings.
    - Reflect the cultural and religious backgrounds of the children.
    - Include vegetarian options, and where possible, Halal or Kosher food.
- Foods containing nuts are avoided; vigilance is maintained where children have known allergies.
- Staff research dietary rules for specific religions and vegetarian/vegan diets to ensure compliance.

Mealtime Organisation

- Mealtimes are social, with staff eating alongside children.
- Children are encouraged to develop independence through:
    - Making choices
    - Serving themselves
    - Using utensils appropriate to age, development, and cultural practices
- Fresh drinking water is always available; children are informed how to access it.
- Early or late sessions include appropriate meals or snacks based on parents' requests.

Packed Lunches (Parent Provided)

When parents provide packed lunches, the nursery:

- Ensures perishable items are refrigerated.
- Provides information on healthy eating.
- Advises parents on suitable containers and whether microwaving is available.
- Encourages balanced contents: sandwiches with healthy fillings, fruit, yoghurt, and milk-based desserts.
- Discourages crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks, and high-sugar items; reserves the right to return unsuitable items.
- Provides children with plates, cups, and cutlery.
- Ensures staff sit with children to make mealtimes social occasions.

Children Under Two

- Parents receive daily written information about feeding routines, intake, and preferences.
- Whole pasteurised milk is provided for children who drink milk.

4. Responsibilities

- **Manager:** Overall responsibility for policy implementation and monitoring.
- **Staff:** Ensure meals, snacks, and drinks meet all dietary, cultural, and allergy requirements; supervise safe and social mealtimes.
- **Parents/Carers:** Provide accurate dietary information and cooperate with nursery guidelines for packed lunches.

5. Monitoring and Review

- Staff monitor food provision and children's dietary needs daily.
- Menus, dietary records, and policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation or children's needs change.
- Parents may provide feedback and use the complaints procedure if necessary.

6. Policy Adoption

Nursery: Little Monsters Day Nursery

Date Adopted: _____

Signed: _____

Role: Manager