

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

6.7 Safe Eating

Policy statement

Cobham Community Pre-School are committed to ensuring that safe and healthy practices around snack and lunch times are followed and those responsible for preparing and handling food are confident and competent to do so.

Babies and young children's immune systems are not as strong and developed as adults which means they are more vulnerable to infections which can lead to food poisoning. It is important to take care with hygiene and preparing food safely.

At registration and before a child begins attending Cobham Community Preschool we obtain information from parents/ carers about any special dietary requirements, preference and food allergies that the child has, and any special health requirements.

An example of snacks are verbally discussed and each week a list of snacks are sent to parents via our Class Dojo app. Staff will make a note of any concerns parents might have, including whether any medical or other issues have arisen which might impact on the child's ability to handle larger textures.

Procedures

Hygiene

Food is stored, prepared and presented in a safe and hygienic environment. Children are taught basic hygiene themselves, such as not eating food that has fallen on the floor, and washing their hands with soap and warm water before eating meals or snacks, after going to the toilet or handling animals.

How to reduce the risk of choking

Food preparation:

- Remove any stones and pips from fruit before serving
- Cut small round foods, like grapes, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, lengthways and into quarters
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts and advise parents of our strict 'no nut policy'
- If children have uncut fruit or vegetables in their lunch box, we cut it accordingly, remind parents and enclose an advice sheet in the child's lunchbox

- Encourage children to chew food well. Teach children how to chew and swallow their food properly, and ensure they take their time during meals. This will reduce the risk in choking
- Think about size, shape and texture of foods. Cut large fruits like melon, and hard fruit or vegetables like raw apple and carrot into slices instead of small chunks
- Cut cheese into strips rather than chunks
- Do not give raisins, marshmallows, popcorn or jelly cubes from a packet to eat or as part of messy play activities as they can get stuck in the throat
- Do not give children hard sweets
- All staff preparing food have undertaken the food hygiene training
- There is always a qualified Paediatric first aider on site and available
- All staff are aware of who the paediatric first aiders are and where to find them
- All staff supervising or providing food are familiar with paediatric first aid advice for children who are choking

Recording of incidents

Whenever a child experiences an actual or potential choking incident, this will be recorded in the setting incidents book and parent/carers would be informed and asked to sign the book. We would include details of where and how the child choked, what the outcome was, and what steps or lessons learned should be acted upon to minimise the risk of it happening again in future. Details of incidents/ accidents are discussed at staff meetings to identify if there are trends or common features of incidents that could be addressed to reduce the risk of choking.

Safeguarding mealtimes

Eating times and spaces in Cobham Community Preschool are designed with safety in mind to reduce the risk of serious harm through choking whilst eating.

Eating environment

Children are seated at appropriately sized low chairs during snack times and at folding picnic tables in a designated area where distractions are minimised.

Children are never left alone while they are eating. Staffing arrangements are in place to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating. A designated member/s of staff is responsible for supervising children at mealtimes and ensure staffing is in place to ensure they are supervising an appropriate number of children, and not distracted whilst doing so.

Responding to choking

Preparing for the possibility of a child choking may ensure staff are ready to respond should it occur. Despite preventative measures, it is still possible for children to choke, and staff who are equipped to respond are most likely to be able to intervene safely and effect a positive resolution.

There should always be a first aid box accessible with appropriate content for use with children. Ensure that staff know where this is kept and relevant staff are competent in the use of the equipment. Also ensure the contents are checked regularly to ensure used or out-of-date items are replaced, and record who is responsible for maintenance of the first aid box(es).

Be clear about emergency procedures, who is responsible for administering first aid and for calling emergency services.

It may also be useful to ensure staff are aware of resources that can assist them to improve their knowledge – the KSCMP Safer Eating Practitioner Resources Guide may be useful to reference (see further resources).

Legal framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Hygiene of Foodstuffs.

Further guidance

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety#food-safety-advice-for-children-age-5-and-under>

Trusts Cycle

<http://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/eatsafe>

KSCMP Safer Eating in Early Years Resource Pack

<http://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/eatsafe>

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Cobham Community Pre-School	<i>(name of provider)</i>
Held on	May 2024	<i>(date)</i>
To be reviewed again	May 2025	<i>(date)</i>
Signed by	<hr/>	
	Kate Rose	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	<hr/>	
	Chairperson	