

Unicef UN Rights of the Child

Article 24: Children have the right to good quality healthcare, to safe drinking water, **nutritious food**, a clean and safe environment, **and information to help them stay healthy.**

We believe that all children should have access to healthy food and nourishment in a supportive and safe environment on a daily and regular basis. We believe food must be available in a sufficient quantity, accessible for all our children. We believe all children must be able to benefit from balanced nourishment in order to develop healthily. Nourishment and meals must be nutritionally filling and contribute to their physical, emotional and intellectual well-being. (Ref. Right to Food, Children's Rights portal)

Rationale:

- We aim to broaden children's experiences and encounters with food as widely as possible.
- We aim to encourage children to become independent, supporting them in acquiring the knowledge and confidence to make healthy choices as part of their lifelong learning.
- We aim to ensure all aspects of food and nutrition in the Centre promote good health and well-being for every child by giving children broad and early encounters with food in a variety of contexts.
- We aspire for our children to explore and encounter food alongside adults who have knowledge about food- for example with Jo our chef.

We are an Award winning Centre for Young Children's Food; in 2014 our Head, Elizabeth Carruthers won the Local Food Hero category of the BBC Food and Farming Awards, in 2015 our chef, Jo Ingleby won BBC Cook of the Year in the same awards. In 2016 we won the Nursery World 'Best Nursery Food' Award.

Redcliffe is a no nut nursery and we never use nut ingredients or oils in cookery.

Objectives:

Health (Please also reference the Health and Safety Policy)

- To work in partnership with parents and health professionals ensuring the sharing of experience, knowledge and expertise;
- To use the expertise of our school chef and to work closely with our school meal provider in providing good quality food which accords with nutritional requirements as set down in guidelines by the Government;
- To ensure that all staff preparing food have received current food and hygiene training;
- To ensure that all children's individual dietary requirements and allergies are fully catered for;
- To help every child acquire an awareness of healthy living and general physical well being;
- To strive for all children and staff to have the opportunity to access a healthy and nutritious breakfast, lunch and tea, and fresh drinking water.
- We only serve water and milk as drinks at Redcliffe and ask parents providing packed lunches not to include drinks.
- To support the idea of a nutritious packed lunch and ensure it is stored in a suitable, cool location.

Well-Being (Please also refer to the Equalities and SEN policies)

- To provide a well planned, comfortable and safe eating atmosphere, which has the individual child at the centre of the experience.
- Our lunches are a friendly, sociable time. The children sit at tables set with tablecloths, flowers, cutlery and china plates. We actively encourage the children to self-serve and to make choices for themselves. Adults always join the children to eat lunch.
- To acknowledge the inherent social nature of food and eating and develop a culture of food, which is supported by an environment that is physically and psychologically conducive to sharing a meal – i.e. homely, relaxed and inviting to social conversation;
- To work sensitively and mindfully with regard to the culture of each family and their food culture;
- To address the growing trend of food poverty in families.

Broadening of Experiences (Please also refer to the Teaching and Learning policy)

- To provide a curriculum for all children that enriches and broadens their experience, and provides wider opportunities to taste and eat a range of foods;
- To support children in acquiring knowledge about where food comes from;
- To cascade our learning about children in regard to food and eating to other practitioners from outside the centre;
- To keep a file dedicated to articles and research around food.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

We will regularly review our progress in terms of our aims using research, through observations, case studies, questionnaires, school meal numbers and staff, parent and child verbal feedback.

Policy into Practice (Evidence):

Staff

- Key people and nursery meal staff are invited to eat hot meals with the children, it has been found in our research that adults' sharing the same meal as the children is extremely effective in encouraging food acceptance among the children.
- We see our kitchen staff as integral to centre life and of vital importance to children's lunchtime experience. We support these key people in developing their own practice with children. For example one of our SMSA's who was a parent of children in our centre now cooks lunches.
- Packed lunches are stored within each room in a cool suitable area. Packed teas are stored in Blackbird's fridge.
- All SMSA's, our chef and all members of staff who prepare tea club lunches have been trained in food safety and food handling.

Food Provenance

- We make homemade biscuits such as Gingerbreads, all of which have a reduced amount of sugar to shop bought biscuits.
- All of our meals are prepared on site from scratch using fresh, seasonal produce.
- We plan our own menus which change every term, we are happy to hear suggestions and ideas from parents and children.
- We only ever use Free Range Eggs
- Our meat is sourced from Newton Farm (between Bristol and Bath)
- Vegetables are sourced from East Street Fruit Market and Windmill Hill City Farm (and often from the Nursery's garden)
- We do not use gravy powder, stock cubes or processed sauces.
- We make our own spice blends and stock to guarantee the best flavour and lowest use of salt.
- We can cater for any dietary requirements but please talk to use and fill in a dietary requirements form so that we can make sure we are meeting your child's needs.

Other Agencies

- We work in conjunction with midwives, community nursery nurses and health visitors to support breastfeeding and weaning.
- Our school chef (Jo Ingleby) works in partnership with the local authority food procurement officer (Matthew Roberts) to ensure the provenance of locally sourced good quality produce and to ensure compliance in regard to health and safety requirements in regard to the preparation and storage of food.
- Jo also works with Jessica Williams (Public Health, Children and Young People, Bristol City Council) from the local authority in regard to nutritional content of food and portion control.

Parents

- All weekly menus are on prominent display for parents to view
- A member of staff (Sarah Appleton) coordinates a food voucher scheme which is available for any family struggling to purchase food

Children

- At breakfast times children have a choice of cereal, fruit and different types of bread and toast. In the winter time we offer porridge.
- We offer a mixture of hot and cold teas.
- We provide homemade dishes, pasta sauces, soups and cakes as part of the weekly tea club menu.
- When children are settling we provide the opportunity for them to join their children for lunch as they support their children to feel secure eating at nursery.
- The ethos around food applies at snack time when children meet in their nest area with their key person to enjoy a healthy snack of fruit and milk/water.
- In addition, children's autonomy in being able to 'build their own meal' through self-selecting food from dishes onto their own plates, has been shown to increase children's consumption, varied choices and confidence and positive attitude around food.
- "McMillan found that conditions in which children ate as important as what they ate".
- The same ethos around relationships which is crucial to children's food and eating extends to the trips to the forest and to the allotment where key people support cooking and eating in the outdoors. For example one member of staff recently cooked/ baked flatbread with her group in the forest.
- Children can access fresh drinking water at any time in both rooms. In Blackbirds each child has their own drinking bottle with an accompanying name and photo tag to enable children to independently access their own drinking utensil.
- Regular visits to our allotment help to support the development of food provenance in our children and accompanying parents. Children and their parents are involved in the planting, growing and harvesting of food which is then often cooked on site and eaten by those present. Other times the produce collected is brought back for consumption back at the centre and is sometimes also incorporated into children's lunches.

CPD

- Research within the centre has led us to acknowledge that relationships between children and adults are key to a happy and positive eating experience for children. We therefore strive for a familiar adult who knows the child and his/ her family to be present at meal times. This also supports the recognition that mealtimes are social and wholeheartedly part of the children's day rather than separate from the other aspects of nursery life.- McAuliffe and Lane (2005)"life is seamless whole".
- We have lots of evidence of children's learning and thinking through the medium of food (see our food journals, pen portraits of children's journeys with food , learning diaries and comments by Ofsted Inspectors arising from Inspection reports)

But our ethos is also one of children learning about food in a multi sensory way and in a way that stimulates and provides for children's intellectual curiosity.(see our food booklet and draft research paper titled How Far Can A Children's Centre Develop A Curriculum that is about food and eating as well as through food and eating.) This food exploration involves adults supporting children's lines of enquiry and is not about an end product.

- We regularly run study days in regard to children learning about food and eating. See examples of evaluations completed by individuals who have attended these CPD days.
- Staff contribute articles they find of interest around food and young children to a file which is kept in the professional research library.

References:

McAuliffe,A & Lane,J (2005) Listening as a Way of Life; Young Children's voices Network, N.E.B.

McMillan,M.(2012) The Nursery School, London; Forgotten Books