Food Safety and Healthy Eating Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the nursery's approach to promoting healthy eating and ensuring food safety where meals and snacks are provided by parents/carers and not prepared on-site. It supports children's wellbeing by promoting nutritious choices and ensuring safe food handling and storage within the nursery.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children attending the nursery
- Parents and carers providing food from home
- Nursery staff responsible for supervising mealtimes and managing food storage

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3. Policy Statement

The nursery is committed to:

- Promoting healthy eating habits and positive food attitudes
- Supporting parents in providing safe and nutritious meals
- Ensuring all food brought into the setting is stored and handled in a hygienic and safe manner
- Protecting children with food allergies, intolerances, or cultural dietary needs

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4. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing a balanced, healthy meal and snacks each day, suitable for their child's age and nutritional needs
- Labelling all food containers with the child's full name and date

- Using insulated lunch bags or ice packs if food needs to be kept cool during transit
- Avoiding items that present a choking risk (e.g. whole grapes, hard raw carrots, whole cherry tomatoes, popcorn)
- Clearly informing the nursery of any allergies or dietary restrictions in writing

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5. Nursery Responsibilities

5.1 Safe Storage of Food

- All food from home will be stored safely in a designated fridge or appropriate storage area
- Perishable foods must be placed in the fridge upon arrival; staff will assist as needed
- Staff will monitor fridge temperatures daily to ensure safe food storage (fridge at or below 5°C)

5.2 Food Safety and Hygiene

- Children will be supervised while eating to prevent choking and ensure good table manners
- All staff follow hygiene protocols, including washing hands before handling any food or assisting children
- Eating areas will be cleaned and sanitised before and after meals
- Staff will wear disposable gloves if handling children's food directly

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6. Promoting Healthy Eating

- Parents are encouraged to provide meals with a balance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, and protein
- The nursery discourages high-sugar, high-fat, and highly processed foods
- Fizzy drinks and sweets are not permitted
- Water is available to children throughout the day and during all meals and snacks
- Staff will model and encourage healthy eating behaviours during mealtimes

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7. Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

- A record of each child's allergies or dietary needs is kept and reviewed regularly
- Allergy information is displayed in food storage and eating areas for staff reference
- Staff are trained to recognise signs of allergic reactions and to follow emergency procedures
- Parents must not include any food items that are banned due to allergy risks in the setting (e.g. nuts)

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8. Mealtime Environment

- Mealtimes are treated as social, educational opportunities
- Children are encouraged to try new foods in a supportive way but are never forced to eat
- Children are supported in developing independence, such as opening containers and feeding themselves (age-appropriate)

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9. Monitoring and Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if needed
- The nursery welcomes feedback from parents and staff to improve food safety and healthy eating practices
- Any concerns regarding food safety or dietary issues will be addressed promptly by the nursery manager