****

**Healthy Eating Policy**

The Ark Nursery is committed to meeting the EYFS Welfare Requirements and the individual needs of children attending. We aim to do this by:

* Discussing with parents on their child’s entry to the setting their individual dietary needs, any allergies and any religious requirements.
* Recording information about individual children and ensuring that all staff are aware of those needs.
* Planning our meal and snack menus in accordance with the Children’s Food Trust’s Voluntary Food & Drink guidelines for early year’s settings in England; ‘Eat Better, Start Better’. Children’s Food Trust website:
* Providing nutritious food using fresh produce, locally sourced where possible.
* Discussing with parents their children’s needs on a regular basis and updating records accordingly.
* Ensuring that menus are varied, that children are consulted and that menus are displayed.
* Ensuring that children are offered food and snacks according to cultural and medical requirements.
* Displaying information about meal and snack times in the nursery.
* Supporting children who are ‘fussy eaters’ to experience new foods in a relaxed supportive environment with peer and adult role modelling.
* Providing parents, with children under the age of 2years with written daily information regarding food intake.
* Ensuring that children are offered age appropriate utensils.
* Providing meal times that are social times where children feel comfortable, staff participate, and independence is encouraged.
* Working with required agencies to ensure all requirements are met with regard to the handling and preparation of food.
* Discussing dental health and foods which are good for our bodies with older children.

We will make every effort to help educate the children and parents about the importance of a healthy balanced diet, and the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

We will take into consideration cultural, religious and other dietary requirements when planning our menus, and by working in close partnership with parent/carers will ensure that we meet their child’s particular needs. We celebrate festivals and significant events through food with a change of menu or cooking activities linked to the event. This will also provide us with a valuable opportunity to introduce all of the children that attend our setting to different cultural food types.

Food is used to support all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Learning outcomes and types of learning. Children are provided with opportunities to find out and learn about where food comes from and how it reaches our table. They are encouraged to explore food with all their senses. Messy play activities allow children to connect with the food properties in a fun way, experiencing the sight, touch, smell and taste from a very young age. Using real food in role play allows meaningful experiences and interactive food displays allow children to be become aware of different foods. Cooking activities support and encourage discovery and a concept of change as well as supporting the trying of new and familiar foods. (Jelly must always be made up before use. Cubes should never be used unmade).

By recognising that “Children start learning about food at a very early age, the messages they receive during this time lay the foundations for the choices they make about food as they move up to school and beyond.” (quote from the Children Food Trust)

Food and Drink Preparation

* All Staff at The Ark Nursery have a duty and responsibility for the correct maintenance of food and drink preparation areas.
* Staff who prepare meals and snacks will undertake appropriate food hygiene training both external and internal.
* Surfaces will be cleaned before and after any food/drink preparation.
* Faults and breakages will be reported to the manager.
* Equipment will be checked regularly as per regulatory requirements.
* The setting will hold the required Environmental Health certificate.

This policy is reviewed annually