Woodlands Food Policy

Name of School: **Headlands Primary School**

Person(s) Responsible: **Head teacher, Woodlands Lead**

Review Date: **May 2022**

Distribution: **Governors and Woodlands staff**
Available for all parents

Web Page: **www.headlands.org.uk**

This policy was written by Karen Smith and approved by Governors in May 2021

Woodlands **Food Policy**

Introduction

Feeding and eating problems are common in children with Autism. There can be a range of difficulties such as:-

- Having a very limited diet e.g. only eating beige coloured foods
- Struggling with certain textures
- Not liking particular smells
- Only wanting to eat from particular plates/bowls
- Transferring skill of eating from one place to another
- Anxieties around food

Aims

- To outline the difficulties associated with eating
- To outline strategies to support with a range of difficulties
- To develop staff thinking around eating with a solution based approach

Healthy Eating

We promote a healthy diet across Woodlands. At snack time and lunchtime, the children are encouraged to both try and eat healthy foods including fruit and vegetables. As part of our curriculum there is a focus on cooking and exploring food, teaching the children about a healthy lifestyle.

We refer to unhealthy food as **treat food.** This helps the children understand that these foods should only be eaten occasionally or in small amounts.

Approaches and strategies

All approaches and strategies are developed with home and school working closely together.

Snack time

This is a great opportunity for the children to see others eating and enjoying a range of food. Giving children the opportunity to hand out food to others that they don't like without the pressure of having to try this can build confidence around food.

Food and messy play

Children are given opportunities to touch, smell and play with food and other textures e.g. playdough, cornflour and water.

Senseology Sessions

These fun and interactive sessions focus on the children using their five senses of see, hear, touch, taste and smell to explore a range of food and non-food items. This builds their confidence in food being non-threatening.

Limited diet

When children's diet is limited parents are encouraged to send in some familiar foods daily in a packed lunch alongside ordering a school lunch. Children will sit amongst their friends who are eating their lunch and become familiar with the routine first. Once trust is built children are slowly introduced to the smell of the new food first before trying this.

Visuals are used to support the children in kissing, licking and then tasting any new foods. Rewards are also used as a powerful tool to encourage the children to give this a try. These are personal to the child.

A **first** and **then** schedule is sometimes used, with the child encouraged to try a small amount of a new food followed by their familiar food.

Children who have a significant difficulty in this area will have an individual eating plan written in conjunction with parents - *see appendix 1 individual eating plan.*

Feeding Children

Sometimes children need some help and support to try new foods. Adults will use the strategy of offering food to the child's mouth but it is always the child's choice if they take the food from the spoon/fork and eat it.

Celebrating Success

Children thrive on seeing others being successful. Positive praise is used daily to celebrate the children's small steps of progress with eating. Photos are taken and shared with parents so they can be part of this journey. This supports in transferring the skills to home.

Food in the Community

We take our children 'out and about' to find out where food comes from, where to buy food and to experience eating in a range of different settings e.g. café, restaurant, picnic outdoors. Children visit our local shops to buy food for snack and cookery sessions. This helps our children link the different areas of the food chain and equip them with valuable skills for life.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually.