Sue Scarbro's Safer Eating Policy

Rationale

This policy is designed to support Childminders to safeguard mealtimes and reduce the risk of serious harm resulting from choking whilst eating. It has been written to incorporate the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework as well as good practice and learning from incidents where children have sadly died during mealtimes.

Procedure

Throughout this policy we are referring to all food including all meals and all snacks.

Before a Child starts at my Childminding Setting

The EYFS requires that before a child is admitted to my setting, we must obtain information about any special dietary requirements, food preferences, food allergies that your child has, and any special health requirements.

It is essential that we discuss with you what stage of weaning your child is at, if applicable, including detailed information about textures your child is familiar with.

Progression from the introduction of first foods, to a range of blended or mashed foods, and then to a wider range of chopped or minced foods should be a gradual process, based on each child's developmental readiness rather than a staged process based on age alone.

Staff Competency

We will ensure that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so. All staff involved in the preparation and handling food will receive training in food hygiene.

At least one member of staff will hold a current 12 hour Paediatric First Aid Training Course and this will be updated every 3 years.

All staff will be aware of the First Aider at the setting and the procedures to follow if an incident occurs. The First Aider will be in the immediate vicinity of children during mealtimes.

Parents Providing Food

We will discuss with you how food is to be prepared for your child when it is being brought in from home.

Recording and Learning from Incidents

Should your child experience an actual or potential choking incident, we will record this on an accident and incident record form and the risk assessment will be updated with any additional steps and lessons to be learned. Recorded information will include: where the incident happened, how the child choked, what the child choked on, what the outcome was, what steps or lessons were learned.

Safeguarding Mealtimes

We will ensure that eating times and the space designated to eating are designed with safety in mind to reduce the risk of serious harm through choking whilst eating.

We will ensure that children are seated in either a highchair or appropriately sized low chair/dining chair with booster seat whilst eating.

Your child will be supervised at all times when they are eating by myself or a designated member of staff and will never be left alone. Either myself or a designated member of staff will sit or stand face-to-face with your child during all meal and snack times.

Responding to Choking

Despite preventative measures it is still possible for a child to choke and we will ensure that we are ready and prepared to intervene safely and effect a positive resolution. We will follow the recommended course of action taught in our Paediatric First Aid Course. There will always be a first aid box accessible containing appropriate contents and I will ensure that relevant staff are aware of where this is stored and that they are competent in using the equipment.

Procedures are in place in the setting to ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities around contacting emergency services should the need arise.

Childminder's Signature: SScarbro

Date: January 2025