

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Daisies Montessori Nursery School we regard snack time and lunch time as an essential part of the children's daily routine. They are times which provide valuable opportunities for learning and for adults and children to enjoy each other's company and engage in conversation. Adults at the meal table have the opportunity to role-model social behaviour, such as active listening and courteous table manners, to the children in a relaxed atmosphere and the children enjoy the opportunity to socialize in small groups.

We endeavour to work in partnership with parents to develop and support healthy eating habits which will not only promote their children's growth and development while young but which will also provide a strong foundation for health and well-being in their adult lives. We help children to understand the importance of a healthy diet by ensuring that we provide healthy, well-balanced and nutritious snacks; parents provide healthy, well-balanced and nutritious packed lunches; and that our staff members talk to the children about the choices they can make to stay healthy. We understand that we have an overarching responsibility for the welfare of all of the children who attend our nursery and we therefore adhere to our Health and Safety Policy and Food Hygiene Policy.

PROCEDURES

ALLERGIES

We follow these procedures with regards to allergies in our setting.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we ask their parents about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies (see Managing Children who are Sick, Infectious or with Allergies Policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in the Registration Form and parents sign the form to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs – including any allergies - are up-to-date. Parents sign the updated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all of our staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. Our list of the children's allergies is in the kitchen.
- Particular care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies do not have contact with the food products to which they are allergic, and we are a nut free nursery.
- We discourage children from swapping food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- We request that parents do not give their children snacks, treats or food in the cloakroom during drop-off or pick-up time or leave any food item in their children's bag in the cloakroom.
- Any food prepared during a class activity which children take home is to be wrapped and given to the parent/carer collecting the child so that it may be eaten at home.
- There will be special events, such as our annual Christmas Party or Sports Day Picnic where parents are invited to bring food which is prepared at home to contribute to the party buffet. We request that all such food is clearly labelled with its ingredients and that all parents are aware of what their children are eating throughout the celebration.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- We show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. We do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy.

FOOD AND DRINK

- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and adults participate.
- All children learn from early on that they must sit down while eating or drinking. They are also shown to eat independently, serve themselves and pour their own water.
- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children and additionally there is milk at snack time. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- In keeping with our Montessori Philosophy, children are shown how to use real drinking glasses and crockery from early on. They are shown how to take care when handling breakable items and the teachers ensure that the children understand that they must handle such items with care. The children also understand what to do in a situation when an item breaks in their class; and how to keep themselves safe.
- All children and staff wash their hands before eating and before preparing any food items.
- Tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray before every meal and all food preparation areas are cleaned before use.
- All of our staff have a current Food Hygiene qualification.
- Snacks for the children are prepared in a clean, purpose-refurbished kitchen which is regularly inspected by food hygiene officers
- We comply with all environmental health requirements for food preparation and storage.
- The Snack Café is open between 10.15am and 11.00am.
- Lunch is between 12.00pm and 12.30pm.

NUTRITION

We follow these procedures with regards to nutrition in our setting.

- As part of our commitment to giving the children in our care the best start in life, we understand that we must provide them with nutritionally sound and varied snacks.
- We understand that it is essential that young children get adequate amounts of calories and nutrients to support their rapid growth and development.
- It is equally important that young children do not consume too many calories as this may lead them to becoming overweight or even obese.
- It is important for young children to consume the right type of food and reduce the amount of sugar and fat content in their food, which can lead to potential problems in their teens and adulthood.
- We plan our snacks so that the children are given a variety of foods from the main food groups:

Dairy: Includes milk, cheese, fromage frais. These foods provide protein, calcium and vitamin A. Recommended serving is three portions a day.

Carbohydrates: Includes bread, crackers, biscuits. These foods provide carbohydrates as well as fibre, vitamin B and iron. Recommended serving is four portions a day.

Fruits and vegetables: Includes fresh, frozen, dried. These foods provide carotenes (a source of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron and fibre. Recommended serving is five portions a day.

Protein: Predominantly consumed in packed lunches and at home rather than snack. These foods provide protein, zinc and iron. Oily fish provides omega 3 fatty acids, vitamin A and vitamin D. Recommended serving is two portions a day.

PACKED LUNCHES

Children are required to bring packed lunches, we:

- provide guidelines for the parents about what to pack in the lunch box
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or fromage frais. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water
- discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort
- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool
- inform parents whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home