

Food, drink and healthy eating policy

Statement of intent

The Chagford Montessori Nursery School regards snack and meal times as an important part of the nursery school's session/day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating.

Aim

At snack times, we aim to provide a nutritious snack, which meets the children's individual dietary needs and to meet the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the nursery school, we find out from parents about their children's dietary needs, including any allergies.
- A notice on our notice board displays the allergens that might be used in snack and cooking activities. We ask parents to inform us of any allergies so that we can ensure that the activities are suitable for all children e.g. cooking with gluten free flour.
- We record current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them (see red alert folder kept in kitchen).
- We provide nutritious food at all snacks, avoiding, as much as possible, fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- We include the following elements in snacks which are offered: essential minerals and vitamins in raw vegetables and fruit, protein and minerals in milk.
- We ask parents about their cultural background and celebrate their festivals with appropriate foods.
- Through discussion with parents and research by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and about food allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks.

Food and drink policy

- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We organise lunch times so that they are social occasions in which children and lunch time staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, feeding themselves and clearing away.
- We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We show the children how to help themselves to a drink and inform them that they can do so at any time during the session/day.
- We ask parents who provide packed lunches to use an ice pack in the lunch boxes to keep food fresh and use suitable reusable containers for food wherever possible.
- We have rules about children not sharing and swapping their food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- We ask parents to cut up certain foods to prevent choking hazards, i.e. grapes, small tomatoes etc
- We have a NO NUT policy in case of allergies.
- We ask parents to provide healthy packed lunches avoiding sugar and salt.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the nursery school, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Health & Safety, Food Safety. All records are kept in accordance with the GDPR Act of 2018