

Healthy Eating, Food and Drink Policy

(Including packed lunches)

Butterflies Montessori Nursery regards snack and meal times as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We ensure that all snacks we provide for the children are healthy and nutritious and meet the children's individual dietary needs.

Our aim in writing this policy is to give parents, careers and staff clear guidance on the food we provide at snack. It is also for parents / careers who are providing a packed lunch so that they can support the setting in teaching the children how to stay healthy and to reduce the risk of choking, which to the health is consistent with nutritional standards provided by Early Years Nutritional Guidelines using the 'Healthy Under 5's program and the Statutory framework.

Special diets and Allergies Procedure;

- Before a child starts to attend the nursery parents are asked to provide information about any special dietary needs or allergies their child has to enable the setting to provide suitable foods. In some cases we may ask parents to provide the food themselves. We record current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them. Parents **MUST** inform staff of changes i.e new intolerances that develop/cease.
- We display current individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them (see 'Children With Food Allergies and/or Special Dietary requirements Notices' in kitchen and Snack area). 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 ask parents/carers to be aware of nut and other allergies. For this reason children are not permitted to swap food items. As some children in nursery may have nut allergies we ask parents to refrain from including **nuts or peanut butter** in their lunch boxes/bags (see our Allergies Policy incl. Nut and food allergies).
- All staff must complete a level 2 'Food safety and hygiene course' and ensure it is renewed every three years. Staff certificates may be viewed in the Staff Certificate file in the entrance hall.

Snack Procedure;

- The snack preparation is done on the premises, following a rigorous hygiene procedure, and stored correctly in a fridge and the temperature of the fridge is monitored.

- The snack menu is displayed on the Parent Notice Board. The menu contains nutritious foods following elements to offer essential minerals and vitamins in raw vegetables and fruit, protein and minerals in milk of which a selection from the menu is available each day.
- Children are involved in choosing what is on offer for their snack. This is done through the visual choice board, which Michele Dann uses when buying the snack for the setting.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, preparing and serving food and drink, feeding themselves and clearing away. (In light of any Government guidance in relation to Covid 19 we will adapt our practice accordingly.)
- 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 provide nutritious food for snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings. In a line with Healthy Under 5's programme.
- We include foods through cooking/snack activities from the diets of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- Staff are vigilant to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences as well as their parents' wishes.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts.
- Milk and Water is provided at snack. Water is available at all times. We show children how to help themselves to a drink and inform them they may have a drink at any time of the day. The children follow our hygiene rule of washing hands before eating/drinking. We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children during the day. Children pour their own drink when they are thirsty. Cups/Glasses are washed immediately by staff.
- 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.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, children attending Breakfast club are offered an appropriate and healthy breakfast. Breakfast club is chargeable and can be attended with short notice arranged with the Manager.

Packed Lunch Containers

- We ask that parents/carers provide a packed lunch container where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunch time period. As fridge space is limited we advise the packed lunches are in insulated bags, preferably with freezer blocks to keep food cool especially in the summer months. Parents may place their child's perishable food inside a named plastic bag in the nursery fridge (please inform a staff member).
- Parents / carers put their child's lunch box on the blue trolley upon arrival. The trolley is then wheeled into the lobby area of the hall until lunch time.
- Parents can collect their child's lunch box from the trolley at the end of the day. (Which will be wheeled to the gate.)

Packed Lunches

- Packed lunches are prepared by parents/carers. Due to our ratios and kitchen facilities, we are unable to heat or cook children's lunches.
- We advise parents to provide up to 4 items in a lunch box to encourage children to independently eat all their food, and not be distracted with multiple choices.
- We encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, discourage jam or chocolate spreads.
- Provide a milk based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche. (We advise parents check the sugar level in their children's yoghurts to ensure they are a healthy option.)
- Provide at least one portion of fruit, vegetables or salad a day.
- Parents MUST cut all grapes and cherry tomatoes into $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ to prevent choking, as considered as a serious choking hazard by health visitors/paediatric first aid.
- Drinks of water, pure fruit juice (no added sugar), yogurt drinks or smoothies.
- We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- A small treat such as un-iced cake or small packet of biscuits – not to contain chocolate
- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent as a last resort.

We provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, glasses and cutlery, and ensure staff sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion

Staff Packed Lunches

To support a whole nursery approach, staff are encouraged to comply with this policy when bringing in packed lunches and eating with the children.

Monitoring

To promote healthy eating we will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches and snacks. We will talk to parents/carers where necessary and offer guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches and snack. If lunches are not deemed to meet nutritional standards parents will be advised on changes that need to be made. Any sweets or sugary drinks will be sent home at the end of the day. Water and milk will be provided as an alternative.

Birthdays and other celebrations

We welcome cakes being brought in for the children for their peers to celebrate Birthdays or any other celebrations. We ensure any child with an allergy has a substitute and not excluded. We would ask that shop brought cakes are kept in their original packaging so that staff can read the ingredients, ensuring that children with food allergies are catered for. If cakes are being homemade, please supply a written/typed list of ingredients used.

Guidance:

Statutory framework for the Early years' foundation stage. (September 2021)

The following link has been supplied by Cornwall Council 'Healthy Eating under 5's for further <https://www.healthycornwall.org.uk/organisations/healthy-under-5s/>

This policy was reviewed: April 2023

(Policies dated and signed by Manager in nursery 'Policy and Procedure File')