

58. Nutrition and Mealtimes

EYFS: 3.47 – 3.49

At **Dalling Montessori Nursery** we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times.

Although we are not responsible for providing meals and snacks for the children during their time with us, we are committed to ensuring that children have healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks which meet individual needs and requirements. Time is allocated for morning and afternoon snacks and for lunch. Parents are informed that they will need to provide for their child.

We will ensure that:

- Parents understand that they need to provide enough food for two snack times and one lunch meal.
- Children with allergies and intolerances are noted on the allergies list and displayed in each classroom.
- Parents are provided with guidance sheets with examples of what constitute nutritious food for snacks and meal times, and to avoid large quantities of fat, sugar, salt and artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. Parents are asked to provide their child with a re-usable drinking bottle, preferably one that is made from environmentally-friendly drinking bottle. Water is frequently offered to children. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has and any special health requirements, before a child starts or joins the nursery. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child
- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks. Where appropriate, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods
- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They 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
- Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate in small groups. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged
- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- Cultural differences in eating habits are respected

- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal he/she does not like will have his/her food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish his/her first course, he/she will still be allowed to have their dessert
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Quantities offered should take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with recommended portion sizes for young children
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- The nursery provides parents with daily written records of feeding routines for all children **2-3 years old.**
- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- We do not provide birthday cakes for birthdays. We will celebrate special occasions such as birthdays through smiles and praise, stickers and badges, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song.
- We allow parents to bring in cakes on special occasions. We ensure that all food brought in from parents meets the above and health and safety requirements and ingredients that are listed within the Food Information for Consumers (FIR) 2014 and detailed in the allergens policy and procedure. However, we will not serve the cake in school but let each child take their portion home to eat under the supervision of their parents.
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated every three years.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.