6.6 Food and drink

Policy statement

Privett Montessori Nursery School regards snack and meal times as an important part of the Nursery School's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating through talk, project work and example. At snack and meal times, we aim to encourage children to eat nutritious food, which meets their individual dietary needs.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our Nursery School.

- Before a child starts to attend the Nursery School, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See the Managing Children with Allergies policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his child details.
- 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 up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about them.
- We implement systems 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 provide healthy snacks, supported by parents who bring in a piece of fruit chosen by their child, which include bread sticks, plain biscuit or oat cake – taking care where children have any known allergies.
- We include foods from the diet of each of the children's cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones.
- 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.
- Through discussion with parents and research reading 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.

- 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 meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- 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. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available in the Nursery School.
- We give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk.

Packed lunches

We:

- ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
- inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
- inform parents of whether we have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
- encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraîche where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or milk.

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

Legal Framework

- Regulation (EC) 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the hygiene of foodstuffs

Further guidance

- *Safer Food, Better Business (Food Standards Agency 2011, 2015)* https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/safer-food-better-business-sfbb

Other useful PLA publications:

- Nutritional Guidance for the Under Fives (2010)
- Essential Early Years Cookbook (2009)
- Healthy and Active Lifestyles for the Early Years (2012)

Change log		
This policy was changed on	**Signed on behalf of the nursery**	**Reason for change**
7/08/2020	Veronica van Ingen	Adoption of policy
26/10/2021	Veronica van Ingen	No changes, part of annual review
26/01/2026	Veronica van Ingen	No Changes