

Guisborough Montessori

Food and Drink Policy

Policy Statement

We regard snack and mealtimes as an important part of our day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults, and helps children to learn about healthy eating and socially accepted behaviours such as manners, use of cutlery, to eat nicely etc. At snack and mealtimes, we aim to provide nutritious food which meets the children’s individual dietary needs.

Procedures

At Guisborough Montessori, we follow these procedures to promote healthy eating in our setting:

* Before a child starts nursery, we ask parents/carers about their dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies
* We record information about each child in their individual registration form and parents sign to say that the information we hold is correct
* We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records remain accurate and that any information we hold is current and up-to-date
* We have an allergies book which all staff and volunteers are shown so all staff and volunteers are kept fully informed
* We implement systems to ensure that children only receive food in accordance with their individual dietary needs and preferences, as well as parental wishes
* We plan menus in advance, involving children and parents in the planning
* We display the menu of snack and meals for parents to view
* We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, avoiding large quantities of saturated fat, sugar and salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings
* We include foods from the range of food groups – e.g., meat, fish and protein alternatives, dairy, grains, cereals and starchy vegetables and fruit and vegetables
* We include food from a range of cultural backgrounds – providing children with the opportunity to try new dishes
* We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and we are especially vigilant where we have a child with a known nut allergy
* Through discussion with parents and through research, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups which are represented within our setting. We take into account the wishes of vegetarian and vegan families as well as special regard for allergies. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drinks
* We provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat and fish are offered, and make every effort to ensure Halal or Kosher meat is provided for children who require
* We show sensitivity in providing for children’s diets and allergies. We do not use a child’s diet to single them out, or use their dietary/allergy needs to label the child
* We organise mealtimes so that they are a sociable occasion, in which children and adults participate
* We use mealtimes to help children develop independence through making choices, serving their own food and feeding themselves
* We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and that take into account their eating practices of their culture
* We have fresh, drinking water available at all times which children are taught on admission how to access independently
* Where children arrive early in the morning or stay later in the evening, food will be provided in accordance with parental wishes
* We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities
* In order to protect children with allergies, we discourage children from sharing food with one another
* For young children who drink milk, we provide them with whole, pasteurised milk at break time
* For each child under two, we provide parents with an update on dietary and fluid intake on a daily basis

Packed lunches

Where children are required to bring a packed lunch, we:

* Ensure perishable contents are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool
* Inform parents of our healthy eating policy
* Inform parents whether we have facilities to reheat food
* Encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk- based deserts such as yoghurt or crème fraiche. We discourage the inclusion of sweets and highly sugared drinks such as smoothies or carbonated drinks
* We discourage packed lunches which consists 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 parents as a last resort
* We will provide children bringing packed lunches with a plate, cup and cutlery
* We ensure that adults sit at the table with children to eat their lunch so that mealtimes are a social occasion

This policy was adopted bu Guisborough Montessori on 8th June 2021 and will be reviewed annually