

Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre Healthy Eating Policy

- All aspects of food and nutrition in our setting promote the health and wellbeing of children, families, staff and visitors.
- We take a consistent approach to Healthy Eating across the whole organisation. This is self-evaluated regularly. We ask parents to review this annually in the summer term. We ask children to review this termly. We take account of all this feedback when we review this policy and review our snack menus. Monitoring of safe food hygiene practices is part of our regular cycle of self-evaluation
- Children are involved in cooking and food preparation every day in the Nursery School. Children and parents have the opportunity to prepare food and cook it together through the Children's Centre Kidicook programme.
- We promote healthy eating habits that will lead to lifelong health and well-being.
- We recognise that healthier children learn more effectively. We aim to have an impact on health related issues such as children being over or under-weight and having poor dental health which are such significant factors in Newham.
- We follow the recommendations of the [Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England](#) and the [Eat better, start better programme](#).
- Hazra Patel leads on healthy eating in the Children's Centre.
- Lindsey Foster leads on healthy eating in the Nursery School.

These aims are in keeping with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS which states that 'where children are provide with meals, snacks and drinks they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious' and that 'children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food'.

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Nursery School: Drinks and Snacks during the morning and afternoon nursery sessions

A free snack is offered during every part time session for the majority of the session time. The Nursery School is divided into three rooms. Red Room and Yellow Room (Red Room AM, Red and Yellow Room PM) are for the two year olds. The rooms have their own garden areas which children access freely throughout most of the session.

The Green and Blue rooms are for the 3 and 4 year olds. These children are based in one of the rooms but are free to move between of two rooms and the outdoor area for the majority of the session.

The Red room has its own snack table and the other two rooms share use of a large snack table in the Blue Room. The snack tables are always staffed. Children are offered a range of nutritionally balanced snacks from a two week menu in the Red Room and a four week menu in the Blue Room. The snack tables in the Blue and Red Rooms are only used for snack or for cooking.

In the Green Room there is a small table where children can help themselves to milk or water throughout the session. Milk and water are provided in clear plastic jugs with lids which are easily visible to the children. Although this table is not staffed continuously staff in the rooms will remind children of hygiene rules Children may choose to use the snack tables or not on any given day. Children are only offered an alternative to the foods available on the menu on any given day if they have a medically recognised allergy to an item or food group and there are no suitable alternatives available.

In Yellow Room, children have access to milk and water and staff supervise and support this. If children want a snack, they can freely access this by going into Red Room. Key people encourage their children to access a snack and will accompany them if necessary.

Food is prepared by members of the staff team including the Welfare Assistant in a kitchen area away from the main classrooms. Food is stored in a fridge freezer in this area or in a cool pantry next to the kitchen and is overseen by the Welfare Assistant who checks the use by dates on products such as milk.

Our welfare assistant and 4 of our Level 3 Early Years Educators have up to date Food Handling Certificates.

Food is funded through our School and Centre budgets and the milk is provided free for under fives.

Children are encouraged to be independent at the snack table. They are encouraged to pour their own drinks, serve, spread or cut food as appropriate and then to clear away and wash up after they have finished. Cups, bowl and spoons are later washed in a dishwasher to maintain hygiene standards. The milk and water jugs are emptied, washed and refilled between sessions.

The areas are clean and bright and often have displays nearby relating to healthy food and food preparation. Pictures of the children taking part in snack time or in cooking or tasting activities are often included in displays. In or near the bathroom areas there are pictures relating to healthy practices such as hand washing.

Snack menus are displayed in all four rooms on the Parents' Noticeboards.

The snack areas are accessible to all children and key staff will accompany children who may not have visited the areas before to assist them at first if needed. Staff working at the snack areas model eating as a social occasion. They encourage children to try new items without putting pressure on them to eat, to help themselves and learn about food through talking to them about the food on offer, what they eat at home etc. Water and milk are available for children to help themselves to in all four classrooms and additional water is provided outside in hotter weather.

Children are encouraged to play adventurously outside, so they develop their strength, stamina, co-ordination and fitness. We like to see children to get out of breath. Challenging climbing equipment and two-wheeled bikes are available. All children take part in Forest School which involves walking about a mile to the Forest School zone in Little Ilford Park as well as being active throughout the session.

Children's Centre: Drinks and Snacks during sessions

In the Children's Centre, a snack is offered in the 'Stay and Play' sessions for 0-8's which run on Saturdays and in the holidays for parents and children.

Water and milk are available to drink in 'Parent and Toddler' sessions and in the crèche.

Whenever possible a small healthy snack is served in the crèche. This may consist of fruit, salad vegetables, bread sticks and similar items. Children are in the crèche for a maximum of two hours and do not attend daily.

At the 'Tea and Talk' parent group parents have been preparing a range of healthy snacks to share with each other and a recipe file has been produced to support this.

Snack Menus

Staff from the Nursery School have attended the Early Start Community Nutrition Team 'Snack only' training session and have then used the guidelines from this training course to compile the snack menus. These comply with the guidelines on providing a balance of starchy foods, protein, dairy and fruit and vegetables.

We offer tinned and fresh fruit and vegetables. Low salt and sugar varieties are purchased and all tinned fruit is in natural fruit juice without added sugar. Tinned vegetables and fish are in spring water rather than oil or salted water.

At the table children are asked to take a small portion initially and then they can have more if they wish.

A four week snack menu is offered to the 3 and 4 year olds and for the 2 year olds. We feel that repetition in the snack menu is a good way to ensure that a child has the opportunity to see others eating certain foods regularly before they are confident to try unfamiliar foods themselves. We monitor the children's response to the menus and make small changes related to this while maintaining the overall balance but we do not feel the need to change the menus completely as this is a snack not a full meal provision.

Healthy choices

Snack times across all of our services are used to engage children in talking about making healthy food choices. We use these times to talk with children about specific dietary requirements, too. This helps them to develop an understanding that some people have allergies, some people make ethical food choices (e.g. they are vegetarian or vegan) and some people make food choices because of their faith (e.g. halal and kosher food).

Lunchtimes

A small number of children stay for lunch. Their parents provide a packed lunch. Healthy eating advice is given to parents on the types of food and drink brought in from home.

If necessary, we will speak sensitively with individual parents if we judge that the lunch they are providing is not balanced, with correct portion sizes, and nutritious. Food and drink brought from home are appropriately labelled and stored.

Lunch time is covered by two members of staff who take their lunch break afterwards.

Tooth brushing

We are gradually introducing a tooth-brushing programme across the whole nursery school, as part of our efforts to improve children's dental health. This will be fully rolled out by January 2021. During tooth brushing sessions, children also talk about what sorts of food and drinks promote healthy teeth, or can lead to decay.

Allergies

When children start Nursery school they have a home visit from their key person and a separate individual meeting with a senior member of the staff team. At one of these meetings they complete information forms which include a question on dietary requirements and food allergies.

If a parent tells us that their child has an allergy to certain foods we discuss this with them and ask if they have medical confirmation of allergies. If this is the case we use an appropriate form to take all the relevant details. Copies of this form are kept centrally by the SENCO and in a file in a high cupboard in the bathroom area of the child's base room along with any medication. Medication is clearly labelled with the child's name and all staff in the room are aware of its location.

An overall list of allergies for the Nursery is maintained by the SENCO and copies of this list are kept with the main snack table so that any member of staff working in this area is aware of all allergies. Children with food allergies wear an 'allergy' badge which alerts prompts staff to check the list if they are unsure.

When a child who uses an EpiPen comes to Nursery training is arranged for all staff on the procedures to be followed and the administering of the medication. We discuss with the parent any measures we need to take within the school to keep the child safe such as being particularly careful about washing hands after handling any food which may cause an allergic reaction. All of our staff are trained paediatric first-aiders and we have achieved [Millie's Mark](#).

Provision for Staff

Staff working in the Nursery classrooms have a hot or cold drink made in a separate kitchen and brought to them during the three hour session as they do not have a break. Hot drinks are served in opaque safety cups to minimise risk of spillage or children coming into contact with hot liquids or surfaces. Cold drinks are served in opaque plastic cups with lids. Staff working in the children's Centre have hot drinks outside of the session times unless food and drinks are provided for sharing with parents and children. Cold drinks only are served at shared lunches. Staff who wish to eat during the session may sit and eat with the children at one of the snack tables. No other food is available to staff in the classrooms.

Staff may eat lunch in the staff room away from any areas being used by families. The staff room has facilities for making hot drinks, a fridge for the staff to store food and a microwave for heating lunches.

Festivals and celebrations including Birthdays.

In the Nursery and the Children's Centre we celebrate children's birthdays if parents want us to by singing 'Happy Birthday' to the child at story time. We use a pretend cake so they can have the experience of blowing out candles-we usually take a photo of this for their Special book. We ask parents not to bring in any sweets or cakes as we will not be able to hand these out.

When we celebrate other festivals, we may ask parents to bring in food items such as fruit or bread so that we can make a range of healthy snacks with the children to enjoy.

Curriculum

Children in the Nursery School and those who attend Parent and Toddler Groups in the Yellow room have open access to the outdoor areas for the majority of the session. Here children can run, climb, ride and use small apparatus such as balls freely. Children are encouraged to be physically active in group sessions too through the use of action songs and rhymes.

Educational visits are arranged through the School and the Children's Centre in the holidays to Parks in the local area and further away to show families what facilities are available for outdoor play. The Nursery School is now part of the Forest Schools initiative and will be working with children and their families to develop more confidence around taking part in outdoor activities and using local parks. On short visits during the school session water, milk and a small snack such as breadsticks will be taken by staff for sharing.

Within the Nursery we regularly cover topics which relate to food, healthy eating and bodily awareness. Much of our planning is based around a limited selection of 'Core Books' which includes the following titles- 'I Eat Fruit', 'I Eat Vegetables', 'Titch', 'Handa's Surprise', 'Lima's Red hot Chilli', 'Jasper's Beanstalk', 'The Three Bears', 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. All of these books lend themselves to planning food and health related activities. Cooking takes place regularly within the Red Room and with the older children and we ensure that we only cook healthy recipes. In addition, activities such as planting seeds and growing food, visiting farms and learning about food through role play are part of our core curriculum.

Food and healthy eating cover all seven areas of learning in the EYFS. For example, as they learn to make bread, children are learning chemistry (materials and their properties; how heat changes materials). Making bread also involves kneading, which develops their physical skills, and the perseverance required supports their personal, social and emotional development. As children measure out ingredients, they are learning maths. Our recipe books and cards support children's early reading development. Decisions on the shape of the bread, or decorating food, help children to learn more about expressive art and design. Last, but not least, children who are eating and cooking will also be talking and enjoying the social aspects of food – helping them to develop their communication.

Sharing information with parents

The Nursery School and Children's Centre booklet and website both contain information on Healthy eating and the services provided to support healthy lifestyles. The quarterly Children's Centre Leaflet provides detailed information on the services available. The Centre promotes evidence-based Healthy Eating messages in a range of ways as detailed above. Children's Centre staff will raise concerns and signpost families to the appropriate Early Intervention Service Community Nutrition Services as needed. When children start Nursery school they have a home visit from their key person and a separate individual meeting with a senior member of the staff team. At these meetings they are asked some general questions about their child's health and dietary requirements including the name of the child's doctor and dentist. If the children are not yet registered with a dentist parents are provided with a list of local dentists and encouraged to register. Parents are also given a leaflet which includes general information on the Nursery's approach to Healthy Eating and are made aware of the additional services on offer in the Children's Centre including the Nutritionist advice services. If a parent expresses any concerns around diet, weight or general health at this stage they can be referred at once to the appropriate Early Start Community Nutrition Team Services. We make it clear that we will also raise issues with parents if we have any concerns. We also make it clear to parents via leaflets and conversations that while we provide a snack for children in Nursery this should not be seen as a substitute for a meal.

Parents do not bring food into school for their children to eat during the school day but we work to encourage parents to bring a healthy drink or snack at the end of a session through displays, leaflets and conversations with parents. When for example a visit to the cinema is arranged for families as part of the Children's Centre holiday activities a snack of dried fruit and plain popcorn is included in the cost of the visit. On longer visits when families are asked to bring a packed lunch a leaflet is given showing what a healthy packed lunch may consist of.

Staff taking part in the visits are also expected to bring a healthy packed lunch. These visits may also provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues with parents such as sweets, healthy drinks and snacks and portion sizes.

The relationship between the parent and the child's key person is central to the way we operate in the Nursery. Key persons meet regularly with parents and will raise and follow up on any issues or concerns relating to health or diet. If concerns continue about a child's health staff can raise this with senior staff, with Children's Centre staff or at the termly Children's Staff meeting and issues raised will be noted and followed through.

Sustainability

In Sheringham Nursery and Children's Centre we are increasingly mindful of our role in reducing our impact on the environment. Food waste is minimal as children at the Snack table are encouraged to take small portions initially and then to take a second helping if they have finished the first and want more. Plastic bags which the food is delivered in are always reused within the Nursery. We use crockery which can be washed and reused rather than disposable paper or plastic cups for snack, at the water fountain and on educational visits. We can now recycle paper, cans and plastic wrappers which food is packaged in.

We are working towards growing more salad and vegetable crops in the Nursery and the Children's Centre in the coming year. With the redevelopment of the garden area we have included a water butt and in any future developments we would hope to include a compost bin and small greenhouse.

Context

We are an integrated Children's Centre and Nursery School.

The Nursery School offers 72 full time equivalent places for children aged three and four, and 26 full time equivalent places for children aged two.

The Children's Centre includes purpose-built facilities on site and outreach bases in local primary schools and other community buildings, serving the whole of the Manor Park neighbourhood.

The School is open during term time and the Centre is open to families with children up to the age of 8 for an additional 10 weeks of the year during the school holidays. We have built up strong links with all of the local early years settings, early years provision in schools, and childminders.

Our families speak over 18 different languages and come from a wide variety of different countries, economic, religious and social backgrounds. Some of our families live in temporary and/or overcrowded accommodation and mobility is high. Within Newham the numbers of children who are both underweight and who are obese exceed the national figures and tooth decay in the under 5's is the second highest in London.

In the Nursery School children attend for a three hour session either in the morning or the afternoon. We provide two snack bars with open access throughout the majority of this session and water and milk are available to drink at all times. In the Children's Centre parents attend classes, courses and some drop-in services with their children. We provide water and milk to drink at Parent and Toddler sessions and a snack in some particular sessions. A drinking fountain has been installed in the lobby to allow access to fresh drinking water for all visitors.

In the Children's Centre we hold a range of range of sessions and courses designed to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy eating. These include ante-natal classes, advice and support on breastfeeding and healthy eating for under 5's, Health Visitor Drop-ins and regular visits from the Dental Health nurse to the various groups. We run weekly swimming sessions for parents and children, exercise classes for parents, baby club, and active singing sessions for parents and children. We also promote the Healthy Start vitamin scheme.

Policy Development

The Children's Centre Co-ordinator has worked in co-operation with the Assistant Head of the Nursery School to write this policy. Members from both teams have attended training and we have discussed related issues with the whole staff team. The Children's Centre Co-ordinator orders food for the Children's Centre and the Deputy Head orders food for the Nursery School. In developing the Policy the needs of children 0-5 have been taken into account in the light of the training received. Aspects of Healthy Eating are raised with parents in a number of ways including written information, displays, surveys and conversations with key staff. The Healthy Eating Policy is published on our website and parents are invited to comment. The policy will be reviewed and it's impact assessed annually through consulting with staff, parent, carers and governors.

Consultation

If you have any comments or questions about the policy please make these know to staff.

The policy was first completed in March 2013. It was last reviewed in March 2020.