

OLD CHURCH NURSERY SCHOOL HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Aims

Our aims are:

- To provide children with a wide and nutritionally balanced diet to develop their health, growth and well-being.
- To show children that meal times are a good time to socialise with each other and to share food together.

Eating a varied diet

We believe that children should eat a varied diet because this is associated with better health as it is more likely to contain all the vitamins and minerals the body needs. They should eat foods from each of the five main food groups every day. These five main food groups are:

- Fruit and vegetables
- Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- Dairy and alternatives
- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
- Oils and spreads

Healthy eating and healthy teeth

Sugary foods and drinks are avoided as:

- They can encourage a liking for sweet foods in young children
- Can lead to tooth decay if consumed frequently
- Tend to be high in calories and low in vitamins and minerals.

The healthy diet provided in nursery is the best diet for healthy teeth. Foods that contain sugar are eaten as part of a meal. Water and milk, which are the safest drinks for teeth, are provided between meals. Snacks of fruit are nutritious and free of added sugar.

Dental health is an important issue in Tower Hamlets. Old Church Nursery aims to prevent dental problems related to diet by adopting this healthy eating policy.

Equal Opportunities

All children and their parents/carers should be respected as individuals and their food preferences and religious requirements should be accommodated. This is done by celebrating different festivals and encouraging families to share how they celebrate the festival and the food, which is associated with it.

Children bring with them their race, gender, family background, language, culture and religion and this should be valued in order for children to feel accepted and accepting of themselves. It is important to value the contributions which different cultures and nationalities make to the variety of foods eaten.

Involving Parents/Carers

As in all aspects of our work, we seek to enter into a partnership with parents. We do this by:

- Finding out about special diets before the child starts, or developments as they happen e.g. allergies
- Making menus available by displaying them in the classrooms
- Working with parents to celebrate festivals
- Making sure parents/carers are aware that we are committed to promoting healthy, varied, enjoyable food
- Giving parents clear information on what children eat each day when asked or if there are concerns

Adult Role

Adults have a key role in influencing children's attitudes and choices. Staff at Old Church Nursery seek to:

- Be positive role models
- Provide an opportunity for children to learn about food, food sources, nutrition, health, seasons, growing cycles and other people's way of life.
- Talk about holidays and festivals as food plays an important part in most people's celebrations.
- Develop children's social skills, sitting in small groups at lunch times
- If possible eat the same food and drink the same drinks as the children, to encourage children to taste new and different foods
- Encourage a pleasant and social atmosphere and environment
- Promote the concept that mealtime is a time for eating but it is also a time for learning and socialising.
- Encourage children to listen and take turns, speaking to each other in an appropriate way.
- Support children with special needs when eating
- Support developing independence and confidence when setting tables and clearing away.
- Encourage children to try foods offered
- Use meal times as an opportunity to talk about healthy eating
- Teach table manners i.e. to be seated, to encourage children not to talk with food in their mouths, to give children enough time to eat, to encourage children to use "please" and "thank you".

- Encourage health and safety when eating e.g. using utensils, washing hands

Children's Role

Children are encouraged to take an active role:

- To take turns in setting the tables and putting the name cards away.
- To learn to use a knife, fork and spoon appropriately
- To develop skills and increase knowledge of healthy eating through exploration and cooking and discussion
- To share experiences with peers and adults
- To behave appropriately at the dinner table
- To develop social skills with reference to their age and stage of development
- To develop understanding of healthy foods and confidence to explore new tastes
- To always wash their hands before eating or preparing food

Snack Time

Snack time is an important social time where children learn from each other and learn the names and tastes of different fruit and vegetables. An adult will sit with the children and prepare the fruit and vegetables, talking about what they are doing. Water and full fat milk are provided for drinking. Milk is provided at the start of the day. Water is available for children throughout the day.

Lunch Time

Our lunchtime menus operate on a three week cycle. Menus are displayed in the classrooms.

We ask parents who provide their child with a packed lunch to ensure that it is a healthy, nutritious meal. This should include:

- 1 portion starchy food (bread, pasta, rice etc.)
- 1 portion milk or dairy food (milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais)
- 1 portion fruit
- 1 portion vegetables
- 1 portion non-dairy protein (meat, fish, hummus, falafel)

Tuck Shop

At the end of the day parents and children are able to buy a healthy, nutritious snack from our tuck shop in the playground.

Birthday Parties

Birthdays are a very important event for many children. We make a sponge cake with the children who have birthdays in the same week. This activity is led by one adult from

any one of the rooms. We have a birthday hat which the child wears while we all sing 'Happy Birthday'. We do not have birthday parties.

Festivals and Celebrations

Festivals provide a valuable opportunity to include special foods and to extend knowledge and awareness of other cultures. Parents are welcome to bring food to share but please discuss this with the keyworker prior to the celebration because of our children's special diets.

Foods we do not use

The nursery makes every effort not to use nuts in any form or products known to have nut traces as these can induce severe or even fatal reactions in adults and children with nut allergies.

We encourage parents not to bring sweets or crisps, chocolate and sweetened drinks into nursery.

Party List

We welcome any foods from our Party List.

Please try to ensure there are no nuts or anything with nut traces and that food is Halal.

- Cheese
- Unsalted crackers
- Plain cake
- Bread sticks
- Rice cakes
- Pure, unsweetened fruit juice. We will dilute fruit juice 9 parts water to 1 part juice.
- All types of fresh fruit e.g. apples, oranges, grapes, bananas
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, dates, apricots
- All types of raw vegetables e.g. carrots, celery, cucumber, tomatoes

If you would like to bring any other food please speak to a member of staff as we have children with special dietary requirements.

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