



Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools and Mole Valley Family Centre

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

At Chertsey and Dorking Nursery Schools and Mole Valley Family Centre, our aim is that children will be keen to eat a wide range of foods and enjoy meal and snack times as social activities. We are committed to giving all our families consistent messages about all aspects of healthy eating. We believe that eating and drinking healthily has a real impact upon children's learning, particularly in aiding concentration, and in reducing the incidence of childhood obesity.

Our objectives are to:

- encourage the children to try a wide variety of foods
- enjoy food as part of celebrations as well as daily life
- have an awareness of food which is healthy
- have a balanced and healthy diet
- learn about where food comes from
- learn and follow the socially acceptable behaviours expected at meal and snack times
- promote an awareness of good oral hygiene.

We aim to provide plenty of opportunities for children to develop knowledge and understanding of healthy eating and the practical skills that are needed to understand where food comes from, such as shopping, preparing and cooking food. The children are given opportunities to cook and then share their food with others. They also learn about food through our role play areas which we sometimes set up as cafes, shops, canteens, picnic areas etc.

We also enjoy exploring the use of food in celebrations in different parts of the world and also our own celebrations. We may grow vegetables in the gardens and the children are involved in the whole process from sowing the seeds to harvesting, cooking and eating the food.

In the nurseries and family centre groups, there are opportunities for a snacktime each day. Children are encouraged to try new healthy foods and make decisions about how much food they need or are likely to eat. Water is available throughout the entire session and the children in the nurseries can also have milk.

We operate a lunch club for nursery children which is optional, as well as provide meals for those children who access the 30 hour entitlement, meals are paid for by parents unless the child is eligible for free school meals and the child attends for their funded session before and after lunch. These times are regarded as an important opportunity for social interaction and all of the children eat together and at the same time. We encourage children to attempt a wide range of foods but we do not pressurise them to eat. All our school meals are provided by a contract caterer who is obliged to adhere to the Government's Nutritional Standards. Every day we offer a two course traditional meal, with alternatives offered according to dietary/ medical requirements. It is the parents' responsibility to bring any allergies to the attention of the staff, and we will work in close partnership with parents to enable us to meet every child's needs. The lunch menu is displayed. Staff communicate daily with parents if necessary, if a child has eaten very little at lunch times.

To encourage healthy eating we:

- Do not allow children to bring sweets or any other food into the building (this is also due to the large numbers of allergies)

- Serve hot lunches only, in the nursery and do not provide the option for packed lunches, apart from those children who attend our Special Needs Support Centre

The partnership between parents and practitioners is critical in shaping how children regard food and develop healthy eating habits for life. We believe that we are well placed to lead by example.

Approved by the Governing Body: Jan 2021

To be reviewed by: Jan 2024

Relevant for:-

Centre: Yes	Nursery: Yes	Parents: Yes
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Appendix 1 – Nursery Lunches: Procedures for Staff

Some children have a mid-day meal at school. There is a family service in which a member of staff sits at each table supervising and eating with a group of children.

We believe that meal times should be an enjoyable experience giving the children the opportunity to taste a range of foods, learn acceptable meal time behaviour, to socialise with adults and children and to learn about other children's cultures and individual needs.

If possible children should have the opportunity to help set the tables. This is a valuable experience which gives them the chance to practise mathematical skills (i.e. counting, one to one correspondence), reading (i.e. reading the names on the place mats) and language.

Prior to starting lunch for the first time – where relevant, the key person needs to take the child to show them the lunch room etc. – for afternoon children this should be done on the day before they start staying to lunch. Staff need to ensure that the child's own personal mat has been made and is ready for use.

At meal times we expect the children to learn to:

- sit at the table for the entire meal
- use an appropriate code of behaviour i.e. speaking politely
- try a range of foods
- keep their hands and feet to themselves
- enjoy and participate in the social interactions, talking to and listening to the adult and other children on their own table (but not those at other tables and keeping the volume of noise at an acceptable level)
- use cutlery appropriately and eat independently
- wait their turn and show consideration for others
- have good standards of hygiene i.e. washing hands, not handling food etc.

Guidelines for staff (please use your discretion- these are general guidelines; however there might be occasions when these are inappropriate for individual children)

The office staff will compile a list of allergies and dietary requirements and will ensure a copy of this list is placed on each table as well as informing the meal provider and servery staff of any allergies/dietary requirements as soon as a child starts. Please check the allergies/diet list each day before serving any food to the children.

All children have to wash their hands before lunch – and are encouraged to go to the toilet before this.

The first course - we would normally give each child everything on offer (with the exception of gravy, coleslaw and apple sauce etc) – giving the choice of a big or small portion, however if a child expresses a strong dislike of a particular food only a very small token portion should be given, preferably set apart on the plate from the rest of the food or none at all if you know this child has a particular aversion to that food.

We encourage the children to eat, but we do not force them. We do not spoon feed the children, but encourage them to eat independently.

Wait until most of the children have finished eating before asking the children to give you their plates. Make sure at the end of the meal that all plates are scraped for excess food and waste food is put in one tin/bowl and cutlery in a different tin/bowl .

To begin with we aim to teach some of the younger 2-3s children to use a spoon only but as they are ready we teach children to use a spoon and fork together, or a knife and fork. We expect that at least by their last term at nursery all children will be able to use a knife and fork competently, and children are always encouraged to hold two pieces of cutlery.

When the majority of children have finished their first course the pudding can be brought in.

Pudding is part of the healthy meal, therefore it is not used as a reward or sanction for the main course. For example, children cannot be denied the pudding if they have eaten little of the main course. However children may only have a second portion of pudding if they have made a good attempt at eating their main course.

With their pudding the children have the choice of having a drink of milk.

We do not have such firm rules for the pudding i.e. if the child does not want part of it (e.g. custard) he does not have to have a token amount.

If they have obviously eaten enough please do not put pressure on them to finish their pudding.

All children have the opportunity to go to the toilet before the meal, and therefore should not usually need to go during the meal. However if they do need to use the toilet they may only leave the table to do so one at a time.

We encourage the children to be independent e.g. to fill up their own cup with water (particularly their 2nd cup of water when the jug is less full) and at the end of the meal to collect the mats and empty and collect the cups. During the year we may give them more responsibilities e.g. choosing where they sit, helping themselves to a second portion etc. – but at the same time remembering to have regard for others and to ask the adult first.

If staffing allows, when a table is finished and ready to leave, the children are allowed to go to their appropriate room - rather than wait for all the tables to finish.

Lunch staff need to share information with each other if they have any concerns about a child regarding their eating or behaviour at lunch time, and then, if it is a common concern or they continue to have a concern, they must inform the key person.