



Food and Drink

(Including Food Safety and Hygiene and Nutrition and Menu Planning)

INTRODUCTION

At Living Spring Montessori Nursery, we regard meal-times and snack-times as an essential part of the children's daily routine; a time which provides valuable opportunities for learning and for adults and children to enjoy each other's company. Eating together is a social time for children and adults to share conversations, jokes and even songs. The adult at the meal-table has the opportunity to role-model social behaviour such as active listening and courteous table manners to the children in a relaxed atmosphere and the children enjoy the opportunity to socialize in small groups or even one-on-one.

We help children to understand the importance of a healthy diet by ensuring that we provide healthy, well-balanced and nutritious meals and snacks; and that our staff members talk to the children about the choices they can make to stay healthy. We understand that we have an overarching responsibility for the welfare of all of the children who attend our nursery and we therefore adhere to Health and Safety requirements and Food Hygiene procedures. We conduct regular risk assessments and have effective systems in place to ensure the safety, health and well-being of the children in our care.

We record information from the parents and carers about any special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies their child may have so that we meet each child's individual needs. We satisfy the Food and Drink requirements for the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (3.48 – 3.50), and we work within the good practice guidelines from the Children's Food Trust Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England (2012, updated 2017).

Our processes and routines during mealtimes support the Early Learning Goals in the prime and specific areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage and underpinning our policy is the

theme of ensuring Positive Relationships and Enabling Environments which support the Learning and Development of each Unique Child.

FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE POLICY

AIM

To meet all statutory requirements of the welfare requirements according to the criteria set by the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage as well as acting in compliance with Food Hygiene requirements of the UK.

Objectives

- Living Spring Montessori Nursery has an over-arching responsibility to ensure that the children in our care are kept healthy and safe; as laid out in the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We rigorously adhere to all Health and Safety requirements and Food Hygiene procedures. We conduct regular risk assessments and have put effective systems in place to ensure the safety, health and well-being of the children in our care.
- Parents share information about their children's dietary needs, cultural requirements, allergies and preferences with us upon registration. Our registration form, our booking form and our "All About Me" booklet have sections for the parents to share information about their child's dietary needs and preferences, as well as any dietary requirements due to culture, food intolerance or allergy.
- Dietary information is shared with all staff members, including our chef and the office. Dietary requirements and Health matters (which includes information regarding treatment of the allergies of specific children) are listed in each classroom, the office and the kitchen. We require that all members of staff, volunteers and students make themselves familiar with this information.
- Particular care is taken to ensure that children with food allergies do not have contact with the food products to which they are allergic, and we are a nut free nursery.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs, including any allergies, are up to date. Parents fill-in and then sign the updated record to signify that it is correct and current.
- Through discussion with the parents and research by our staff, we collect information about the dietary rules of the different religious groups we have represented at Living

Spring, as well as details about different food allergies and intolerances. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drink.

- Fresh drinking water will be available and accessible to all children at all times (EYFS requirement 3.48)
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff members do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child or make a child feel singled out because of his/her diet or allergy.
- We discourage children from swapping food with one another in order to protect children with food allergies.
- In order to protect all of the children in our setting from the risk of allergic reaction, parents are prohibited from bringing treats, snacks or food from home to share with their child's class. We request instead that parents bring fruit, which can be shared with everyone for birthdays and for any other celebration in class.
- We also request that parents do not give their children snacks, treats or food in the corridor during drop-off or home time; not leave any food item in their children's bag in the corridor. Food in the corridor can be very easily consumed by another child, causing choking or an allergic reaction.
- Any food prepared during a class activity which children take home is to be wrapped in cling film and given to the parent/carer collecting the child so that it may be eaten at home.
- There will be special events, such as our annual Christmas party or Father's Day picnic where parents are invited to bring food which is prepared at home to contribute to the party buffet. We request that all such food is clearly labelled with its ingredients and that all parents are aware of what their children are eating throughout the celebration.
- We understand that mealtimes must be calm, organised and well supervised, to reduce the risk of choking, to ensure that all dietary requirements are followed and to give all children enough time to consume the amounts of food they want/need and to make sure that they all access fresh drinking water.
- All children learn from early on that they must sit down while eating or drinking. They are also shown to eat independently, serve themselves and pour their own water.
- All children and staff wash their hands before eating and before preparing any food items.
- Tables are cleaned with antibacterial spray before every meal and all food preparation areas are cleaned before use.

- Meals and snacks are consumed in a hygienic and safe area of the classroom area which is thoroughly cleaned after each meal.
- Children use tables, chairs, crockery and utensils which are appropriately sized for their age group and stage of development. Our teachers are also sensitive to the different eating practices; such as using hands or chopsticks instead of a fork, which some of the children attending the nursery may be accustomed to.
- All of our meals are freshly prepared on the premises by a cook who is qualified and who holds a certificate in food hygiene. (“Providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food are competent to do so” Statutory Framework for the EYFS: Food and Drink: 3.49)
- Food for the children is prepared in a clean, purpose-refurbished kitchen which is regularly inspected by food hygiene officers (complies with 3.49: Food and Drink).
- The baby room (Nido) has a milk kitchen in which milk can be heated for the babies and where equipment can be sterilized (3.49: Food and Drink).
- The teachers are all made aware of the procedures for preparing milk safely and they understand the procedures in place for the sterilization of bottles and other equipment.
- All baby milk bottles are clearly labelled with the child’s name, date and time the feed was made.
- We comply with all environmental health requirements for food preparation and storage.
- In line with current requirements, all of our staff members have undergone or are undergoing Level 2 Food hygiene training. (“In group provision, all staff involved in preparing and handling food must receive training in food hygiene) (3.49 Updated EYFS frame work, 2021)
- In keeping with our Montessori Philosophy, children are shown how to use real drinking glasses and crockery from early on. They are shown how to take care when handling breakable items and the teachers ensure that the children understand that they must handle such items with care. The children also understand what to do in a situation when an item breaks in their class; and how to keep themselves safe.

There are standard food safety procedures for the school. These cover:

- Kitchen
- Food for play and children’s cooking activities
- Milk kitchen
- Purchasing and storage of food

- Preparation of food
- Serving of food

Please refer to Food preparation policy and procedures, Food for Play Policy and the Milk Kitchen Policy.

Legal references

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

Good practice guidance

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/?msclkid=0650c7dbc64c11eca9a98a6faaad68df>

NUTRITION AND MENU PLANNING

AIM

To ensure that our setting provides nutritionally balanced and varied meals and snacks which meet the cultural and dietary requirements of all the children in our care. To work in partnership with parents to develop and support healthy eating habits which will not only promote their children's growth and development while young but which will also provide a strong foundation for health and well-being in their adult lives.

Objectives

- As part of our commitment to giving the children in our care the best start in life, we understand that we must provide them with nutritionally sound and varied meals and snacks.
- We understand that in helping children to learn how to make healthy eating choices, we are helping them to develop habits which will not only support their growth and development in childhood but which will also help them to grow into healthy adults.
- We understand that it is essential that young children get adequate amounts of calories and nutrients to support their rapid growth and development.
- It is equally important that young children do not consume too many calories as this may lead them to becoming overweight or even obese.
- It is important for young children to consume the right type of food and reduce the amount of sugar and fat content in their food, which can lead to potential problems in their teens and adulthood.

- Children are unlikely to take in more calories than they need if they are offered a wide range of foods from the four main food groups and that these foods do not contain added sugar or saturated fat.
- We plan our menu so that the children are given a variety of foods from the four main food groups:

Protein - Meat, fish, eggs, beans, pulses and other non-dairy sources of protein (such as Quorn and soya mince). These foods provide protein, iron and zinc. Oily fish provides omega 3 fatty acids, Vitamin A and Vitamin D. Recommended serving is two portions a day; one at lunch and one at tea. Nuts and seeds also come into this category, but are not included in nursery menus due to the high incidences of nut allergies in young children.

Milk and dairy foods: Includes milk, cheese, yogurt, fromage frais, custard and puddings made from milk. These foods contain protein, calcium and Vitamin A. Recommended serving is three portions a day; some of which can be consumed at home.

Carbohydrates Starchy Foods: Includes bread, potatoes, sweet potatoes and other starchy root vegetables, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, other grains and breakfast cereals. These foods provide carbohydrate as well as fibre, B vitamins and iron. Recommended serving is four portions each day, one at every main meal and to be included in a snack each day.

Fruits and vegetables: Includes fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced fruit and vegetables, and pulses. These foods provide Carotenes (a source of vitamin A), vitamin C, zinc, iron and fibre. Recommended serving is five a day, included in each main meal as well as in snacks.

- We provide nutritious food at all snack times, avoiding saturated fat, sugar, salt, artificial additives, preservatives and colourings.
- 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 themselves food and drink and learning how to drink from a glass and how to feed themselves.
- We provide children with utensils which are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and which take account of the eating practices in their cultures.

- We use fresh produce in the preparation of meals; fruits and vegetables are supplied weekly by the local grocer.
- Children also bring a piece of fruit or a vegetable such as carrot or cucumber, which can be eaten raw to contribute to the snack preparation routines of the class. Even the very young children are shown how prepare fruits and vegetables by cutting and peeling them.
- There is an adequate supply of fresh fruits throughout the day and drinking water for the children to help themselves. They are offered snacks and encouraged to drink water regularly.
- Our staff members observe the children to ensure that no child is left hungry or thirsty. Children are all shown how to help themselves to snack and to drinking water throughout the day and the youngest children are given fresh fruit, snacks and water throughout the day. It is a Welfare Requirement that all children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.

Lunch is between 11:30am – 12.30pm for the very young children (The Nido, or baby room), 12 noon – 1.00pm for the Toddler (or Infant Community), and older children (the Children’s House).

- A light meal is served during tea time which is served to the Nido room from 3:30-4:00 and to the Infant Community and the Children’s house between 4pm – 4.30pm. We adapt our time table slightly to suit the needs of the classes at different times of year. For example, teatime can be earlier in the winter time so that the children can enjoy more time outside in the garden when it is light.

When planning the nursery menus, the Manager, the teachers and the cook ensure that:

- Parents, children and staff contribute ideas for menus.
- Menus reflect the children’s varied cultural backgrounds and religions.
- Menus are displayed so that parents and staff know what is being provided.
- Teachers regularly share information with the parents about what and how their child has eaten during the day.
- The school offers a four-week rotating menu which is reviewed every term.

Children with special permission for parents to supply their meals on health grounds

- We give parents of children who require a special diet the permission to provide some of their own food for their children. This is a special measure which will be agreed in writing by the Living Spring Montessori Nursery Manager and the parent/carer. They will be informed of the storage facilities we have available and procedures to be followed.
- Parents who have these special arrangements are asked to fill in a form, itemising what they have brought and when, and they make note of all expiry dates for food brought from home.
- All food must be in the original packaging and clearly labelled with the child's name before handing over to the nursery.

Legal framework:

Statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage (2021)

Early Years Inspection Handbook (2022)

Links to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)

Section 3 – The Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

- Suitable People
- Staff qualifications, training, support and skills
- Key person
- Food and drink
- Safety and Suitability of premises, environment and equipment
- Information and Records
- Information for Parents and Carers