



Meal & Snack Practices & Procedures

It is the policy of *Oaklea Montessori* to encourage the highest standards of health, hygiene and safety. We also see meal and snack times as enjoyable, social times when we talk together and listen to one another, when children are able to develop healthy eating practices and social routines. Meals are prepared from fresh ingredients on a daily basis by an external provider of hot meals.

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to inform the nursery of any food preferences (allergies, intolerances, dietary, religious or cultural requirements). We also ask that parents only provide food for sharing if it is for a special occasion, such as a birthday. No other food should be brought on to the premises this includes a packed lunch from home.

MANAGING HEALTH AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Three check points are in place to ensure that children's dietary preferences are complied with.

1. The room leader checks the dietary / allergy sheets prior to each snack or mealtime. They advise the facilitator which child/ren need special attention, alternative food/drink for the child/ren in question is provided and a place name for each child is ready with the current dietary listing in place. The facilitator ensures that NO child is served snack or meal without a place name in position at the table. The facilitator checks and removes the place name before any food or drink is consumed.
2. At mealtimes (breakfast, lunch & tea), a practitioner should be seated at the table ready to greet the children onto their table and make sure they are sitting at their place name. When everyone is seated, they should collect the place name and inform the room leader if they have a child with a dietary requirement at their table.
3. The mealtime assistant (at lunchtime) passes the information relating to dietary requirements to the room leader who then ensures that the facilitator and practitioner seated at the table understand that alternative food/drink is provided for which child/ren.

Parents are kept informed, detailing what children ate if they did not eat well.

GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES AND SOCIAL EATING ROUTINES ARE FOLLOWED:

All children are expected to prepare for having a meal or snack by using the toilet and washing their own hands, with guidance as required. This is to ensure that no child needs to leave the table during the mealtime.

Children are always encouraged to eat their savoury foods first *before* their sweet. They are invited to select and pour their drink of milk or water.

Positive language is used to encourage shared enjoyment of the food provided. For example, if a child says, "I don't like...", the immediate and consistent response should be, "Don't you? What do you like? I like..."

If a child gets down from the table part way through a meal, they should be quietly reminded that this means they will not be able to re-join the table later.

The facilitator will ensure that this child is safe but not draw attention to their behaviour.

INDEPENDENCE IS PROMOTED

Each child is encouraged to serve his/her own food and drink developing independence and making healthy choices. For example, spreading jam on toast, pouring drinks from a small jug using a serving spoon to help themselves to vegetables. Younger children are also encouraged to make their choices, and staff prepare their dishes and puree / cut up food as appropriate.

Staff model sitting at table for lunch and we encourage the children to remain seated at the table until they have all finished. Staff interact with the children. They encourage “good manners” and converse sociably.

After each child has finished, staff encourage them to scrape leftovers and separate other things for the compost / food bin. They should also ask before leaving the table.

Children may wish to help to set the table and may choose to be the helper (at snack time – serving friends or clearing away after meals).

Please also see Oaklea’s Oral Health policy.

If a child does not friendly or sociable behaviour at the table, the duty manager can invite them to finish eating their meal at a separate table. This is NOT a punishment but a consequence of their choice to behave inappropriately.