



Elmore Kindergarten

Healthy Eating Policy

To be Adopted: September 2020

Review date: August 2021

At Elmore Kindergarten we believe that mealtimes should be happy, social occasions for children and staff alike. We promote shared, enjoyable positive interactions at these times. We are committed to offering children healthy, nutritious snacks which meet individual needs and requirements. The setting recognises that this is a social time and an opportunity for children to learn about healthy eating and develop new skills such as serving food and drink and feeding themselves. Parents are kept updated through the Family app with what food children are eating throughout the day.

Food Served

- Menus are planned on a four-week rota and available for parents to view on Family.
- We provide nutritious food at all meal & snack times; we all always include an abundance of fresh fruit & vegetables throughout your child's day
- Foods high in fat, salt, and sugar will be limited in line with the current healthy eating guidelines for the age group of the children concerned
- Food is always cooked from scratch where possible
- Sugar and salt are not added to cooking or offered to the children, this includes during children's baking activities.
- Quantities offered take account of the ages of the children being catered for in line with government recommended portion sizes for young children
- Parents are requested to provide milk for their babies; this can be formula, breast milk or a preferred alternative. Staff will liaise closely with parents of babies who are weaning concerning their preferred dietary requirements.

Every day we will provide:

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, hummus, falafel)
- A starchy food (e.g. bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other types of cereals)
- Dairy food (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese, fromage frais or custard)
- And it is recommended that an oily fish (e.g. salmon) is included around once every three weeks.

Drinks Served

- Fresh drinking water is always available and accessible. It is frequently offered to children and intake is monitored. In hot weather staff will encourage children to drink more water to keep them hydrated
- Milk will be served with either morning or afternoon snacks. Part-time children will always be offered milk with their snack (whether morning or afternoon)

Allergies and Special Dietary Requirements

- Individual dietary requirements are respected. We gather information from parents regarding their children's dietary needs, including any special dietary requirements, preferences and food allergies that a child has and any special health requirements, before a child starts or joins the nursery. Where appropriate, we will carry out a risk assessment in the case of allergies and work alongside parents to put into place an individual dietary plan for their child
- We give careful consideration to seating to avoid cross contamination of food from child to child. Where appropriate, an adult will sit with children during meals to ensure safety and minimise risks.

Where appropriate, age/stage discussions will also take place with all children about allergies and potential risks to make them aware of the dangers of sharing certain foods

- Staff show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. They do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of their diet or allergy
- Elmore Kindergarten is a nut free environment.

Eating Environment and Equipment

- Meal and snack times are organised so that they are social occasions. During meals and snack times children are encouraged to use their manners and say 'please' and 'thank you' and conversation is encouraged
- Utensils, tables and chairs will be appropriate for the ages and stages of the children
- Any child who shows signs of distress at being faced with a meal they do not like will have their food removed without any fuss. If a child does not finish their first course, they will still be given a helping of dessert
- Children not on special diets are encouraged to eat a small piece of everything
- Children who refuse to eat at the mealtime are offered food later in the day
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and not rushed
- Food and drink will never be used as reward or punishment, to avoid creating anxieties and prevent future problems and potential hang ups with food.
- No food products will ever be cut into rounds as this could cause a plug in the throat causing a child to potentially choke. Grapes are on the menu but sliced into quarters and foods such as bananas and carrots are cut into slices or into rounds but then halved again to avoid this potential hazard. All fruit will be peeled for children under three years old.
- When babies make the transition into toddlers' parents are advised that the mealtimes are different as babies are fed at times requested by their parents as part of the home/nursery routine and toddlers eat around the table all together as a social occasion.

Healthy Eating Education & Promotion

- Staff use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink, and feeding themselves
- Staff support children to make healthy choices and understand the need for healthy eating
- We provide foods from different cultural backgrounds, providing children with familiar foods and introducing them to new ones. Cultural differences in eating habits are respected
- We promote positive attitudes to healthy eating through play opportunities and discussions
- We will use alternatives to food to celebrate birthdays and other festivities such as celebrating through smiles and praise, stickers and badges, choosing a favourite story, becoming a special helper, playing a party game, dancing and/or singing their favourite song
- Birthday cakes can be made on request at a small cost, we offer this service to avoid store brought cakes high in sugar/fat being brought into the nursery. Parents can provide on-food treats instead, such as stickers.
- Food and cooking activities are used in a variety of ways to widen the children's experience as they are given the opportunity to touch, taste, smell and feel a variety of foods.

Health & Safety

- No child is ever left alone when eating/drinking to minimise the risk of choking
- All staff who prepare and handle food are competent to do so and receive training in food hygiene which is updated annually.
- In the very unlikely event of any food poisoning affecting two or more children on the premises, whether or not this may arise from food offered at the nursery, we will inform Ofsted as soon as reasonably practical and in all cases within 14 days. We will also inform the relevant health agencies and follow any advice given.