

Alton School Early Years Department

Incorporating

The Alton & Medstead Nurseries and Reception Year

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Promoting health and hygiene

Food and drink policy

Policy statement

Within The Early Years Department, we regard snack and meal times as an important part of the day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and help children learn about healthy eating, as well as learning social skills. At snack and meal times, we aim to provide nutritious, healthy food. We employ the services of specialist caterers, namely Care Catering from Guildford. Care Catering can provide a well balanced diet for the entire age range of children, including those with special dietary needs. We require parents of babies using formula milk to provide this. Meals are chargeable at cost, or parents may provide a healthy lunch box for their child in accordance with our procedures listed below.

Procedures

We follow the following procedures to promote healthy eating in our Early Years Department.

- Before a child starts to attend the Early Years Department, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies (See Appendix 2 of First Aid policy).
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in her/his registration record, 'All about me' sheet and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records are correct. We ask parents to keep us informed and updated as to their children's dietary needs, including any allergies their child may have. This applies whether the child has meals provided by our catering company, or has a lunch box provided. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.

- We display current information about individual children's dietary needs so that all staff are fully informed and aware of them.
- We implement systems to ensure that children receive only food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs and preferences, as well as their parents' wishes.
- We require staff to show sensitivity in providing for children's diets and allergies. Staff do not use a child's diet or allergy as a label for the child, or make a child feel singled out because of her/his diet or allergy.
- We provide nutritious food for all meals and snacks, which is prepared fresh each day.
- We display the menus of meals/snacks for the information of parents; these are displayed on the notice boards.
- We include a variety of foods from the four main food groups:
 - meat, fish and protein alternatives;
 - dairy foods;
 - grains, cereals and starch vegetables; and
 - fruit and vegetables.
- We can provide a vegetarian alternative on days when meat or fish is offered and make every effort to ensure Halal meat or Kosher food is available for children who require it. This must be ordered in advance.
- We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known allergy to nuts. Care Catering is a nut free kitchen.
- Parents who wish to provide food for their child may do so. Food will be stored either in a freezer if frozen, or in the fridge as necessary.
- We remind parents that we are a healthy school and therefore discourage unhealthy snacks or meals. **We do not allow nuts in lunch boxes.** Sweets or unhealthy snacks will not be permitted to be consumed whilst at school or nursery.
- Meals and lunch boxes must be clearly labelled.
- We can give parents who provide food for their children information about suitable containers for food.
- Heating instructions must be clearly visible where applicable (Nest & Chicks only at Alton, under 2's only at Medstead).
- Children in rooms other than The Nest or The Chicks. or in the over 2's at Medstead, must only bring food which is suitable for eating without the need for reheating. We do not reheat meals or snacks from home.
- We will provide children bringing packed lunches, with plates, cups and cutlery.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.

- We provide children with utensils that are appropriate for their ages and stages of development and that take account of the eating practices in their cultures.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day. We ask parents to provide a suitable drinking bottle or cup to enable the children to access this independently (age dependent).
- At snack times we offer children the choice of water or milk.
- For children who drink milk, we provide whole pasteurised milk in the Nest and Chicks rooms at Alton and in the under 2's room at Medstead, and semi skimmed milk for all other children.
- In accordance with parents' wishes, we offer children arriving early in the morning - and/or staying late - an appropriate meal or snack. This is by prior arrangement.
- For each child, we provide parents with daily written information about feeding routines, intake and preferences.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate. Whenever possible, staff sit with the children to eat their lunch

Signed on behalf of The Early Years Department Alton School
Incorporating The Alton & Medstead Nurseries and Reception Year

P. Grimes
Head of the Early Years Department

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