

SECTION 2: HEALTH & SAFETY

Food and drink

Policy statement

Stanmore Montessori regards snack and mealtimes as an important part of the setting's day. Eating represents a social time for children and adults and helps children to learn about healthy eating. We promote healthy eating, encouraging children to bring their own snack from home, which should be a savoury carbohydrate eg. bread sticks, rice cakes, oat cakes and fruit or vegetables. This nutritious food meets the children's individual dietary needs, and any child bringing a snack or packed lunch that is not healthy, balanced and nutritious will be identified by the key person so that meaningful discussions and education around healthy food can be had with the parents/carers. The children have the opportunity to learn about, prepare and cook a range of foods, and we explain the value of healthy eating through a range of activities and discussions.

Procedures

We follow these procedures to promote healthy and safe eating at Stanmore Montessori.

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we find out from parents their children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies. (See allergies and allergic reaction policy.)
- We record information about each child's dietary needs in his/her registration record and parents sign the record to signify that it is correct.
- We regularly consult with parents to ensure that our records of their children's dietary needs - including any allergies - are up to date. Parents sign the up-dated record to signify that it is correct.
- We have ongoing discussions with parents and carers and where appropriate health professionals to develop allergy action plans for managing any known allergies and intolerances. We refer to [Allergy Action Plans - BSACI](#) as well as NHS advice on food allergies [Food allergy - NHS](#) and treatment of anaphylaxis [Anaphylaxis - NHS](#)
- We display current information about individual children's dietary requirements and ensure that all staff and volunteers are fully informed about 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.
- Through discussion with parents and research by staff, we obtain information about the dietary rules of the religious groups to which children, and their parents belong, and of vegetarians and vegans, and other restricted diets. We take account of this information in the provision of food and drink.
- We organise meal and snack times so that they are social occasions in which children and staff participate.
- We prepare food in a suitable way to prevent choking.
- All children are seated safely in low chairs while eating.
- Appropriate number of staff are seated with the children at snack and mealtimes in a way that they can make sure children are eating correctly to prevent choking, food sharing and are aware of unexpected allergic reactions.
- If a child experiences a choking incident that requires intervention, the incident is recorded, and parents are made aware.

- At snack and mealtimes there is a nominated person responsible for checking that the food being provided meets all the requirements for each child.
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- We use meal and snack times to help children to develop independence through making choices, serving food and drink and feeding themselves.
- We have fresh drinking water constantly available for the children. We inform the children about how to obtain water and that they can ask for water at any time during the day.
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about correct storage and suitable containers for the food.
- We inform parents of our regulatory obligation to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and encourage healthier food choices for packed lunches and snacks.
- In order to protect children with food allergies, we do not allow children to share and swap food with one another.

Packed lunches

- We ensure perishable contents of packed lunches are refrigerated or contain an ice pack to keep food cool.
- Inform parents of our policy on healthy eating and allergies.
- Encourage parents to provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food eg. sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit and milk-based desserts such as yoghurt. We strongly discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water.
- We discourage packed lunch contents that consist largely of crisps, processed foods, sweet drinks and sweet products such as cakes or biscuits. We reserve the right to return this food to the parent if deemed unhealthy.
- We encourage parents to provide and prepare food according to their child's needs and developmental stage (eg. nutrition and portion sizes).
- We provide children with plates, cups and cutlery if required.
- We ensure staff sitting with the children to eat their lunch at the same time, ensuring that this is always a social occasion.

Celebrations

Many families like to celebrate their child's birthday and other special events by bringing in a cake or sweets to the setting to share. This can mean that some children are eating these unhealthy foods several times a week. We aim to reduce the celebrations with cake and sugary treats to once a week. We encourage parents/carers to ensure any food from home is balanced and meets the setting's healthy food guidelines (for example recommending fruit platters to share or non-edible options to celebrate with such as bubbles or stickers). Any food shared in the setting is checked for potential allergens.

Legal framework

- [Early years foundation stage nutrition guidance.pdf](#)
- [Safer food, better business \(SFBB\) | Food Standards Agency](#)
- [EYFS framework for group and school based providers .pdf](#)
- The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013
- [Help for early years providers : Food safety](#)

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
<i>1 September 2026</i>	<i>Nicky Quint</i>	<i>1 September 2027</i>