



Healthy Eating Policy

Date of last review: July 2024
Date of next review: July 2025

Healthy Eating Policy in Darul Madinah

Statement of Intent

To ensure children learn about healthy choices and eat healthily while at Darul Madinah we will ensure meals, snacks and drinks provided by us are varied, nutritious, and well balanced. All Staff that hold a food hygiene certificate are responsible for the preparation and handling of food. Staff Food hygiene certificates and knowledge is continuously monitored in house and updated every 2 years.

The Dar-ul-Madinah Setting recognises that we have a responsibility to promote the benefits of oral health

The aims of this policy are:

- To reduce dental decay, obesity and other health problems associated with a poor oral hygiene routine and a high sugar, high fat diet
- To raise awareness of the benefits of oral health and healthy eating
- To role model and promote healthy eating practices within the Darul Madinah
- To support parents to access free NHS dental services for their children
- To support parents in providing a healthy, balanced diet to themselves, their children and their families
- To ensure all staff provide a consistent message regarding oral health and healthy eating

In order to promote the benefits of oral health and healthy eating

- Snack/mealtimes times are used as an opportunity for positive social interaction in which children, their caregivers, staff and volunteers participate
- Snack times are appropriately supervised and children and adults do not walk around with food
- In order to protect children with allergies, we discourage children from sharing and swapping their food with one another
- Children's growing independence is supported as they are encouraged to pour their own drinks, make choices about and serve their own food, and to have opportunities to be responsible for setting up and clearing away afterwards
- Children are encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners and are given plenty of time to eat
- Fresh drinking water is constantly available for the children and we inform children and adults about how to obtain the water and that they can ask for it at any time during the session/day
- Water and milk (unflavoured) are the safest drinks for teeth. Water and milk only will be offered as drinks in the Darul Madinah
- Explanations are given to children about where food comes from, how it changes, is cooked, different tastes and textures
- We celebrate that food is an important part of culture and tradition. We offer opportunities for children to enjoy food from different cultures and to investigate unfamiliar foods
- We provide evidence-based information to Darul Madinah users with regard to oral health, accessing dental services and healthy eating, in a variety of accessible and relevant forms and languages
- All staff and volunteers are asked to show regard to the healthy eating policy when eating in the presence of setting users
- No confectionary such as chocolate, chocolate coated biscuits, sweets, crisps etc. are provided at the Darul Madinah
- Exceptions may occasionally be made, but usually foods and drinks offered at snack time will be snacks that are kinder to teeth

- Cakes and biscuits are only provided for special occasions such as religious holidays/cultural festivals and in these circumstances healthier alternatives are considered where possible, and portions offered are smaller than those of healthier foods. If cakes and biscuits are offered, this will be at mealtimes only
- We aim to 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
- Children will be helped and encouraged to drink from an open cup
- Snacks containing sugar, or birthday treats are not encouraged. Alternative ideas that put the emphasis on making the child feel special and keep them healthy include wearing badges, stickers or hats,
- Food is not used as reward and the withholding of food is not used as a form of punishment
- Staff help children to understand why some foods are healthy and others are not
- We display information about dental health
- We inform parents who provide food for their children about the storage facilities available if appropriate
- Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, these will be healthy, balanced and nutritious in line with Food Standards.

Fruit juice and dried fruit are healthy but can damage teeth if eaten regularly between meals.

Suggested suitable (low sugar or sugar free) foods for snack time:

- Toast or crumpets with margarine, fish pate, cottage cheese, tuna
- Various types of bread, breadsticks or crackers
- Raw vegetables such as carrot, cucumber etc. – this could be with a dip
- Fresh fruit

We consult with families on food provision and healthy eating, seeking guidance from professionals where necessary

All staff and volunteers receive an induction regarding healthy eating standards and practices used in our setting

Packed lunches

- Where we cannot provide cooked meals and children are required to bring packed lunches, we:
 - ensure perishable contents of packed lunches contain an ice pack to keep food cool;
 - inform parents of our policy on healthy eating;
 - inform parents that we do not have facilities to microwave cooked food brought from home;
 - encourage parents to provide sandwiches with a healthy filling, fruit, and milk based deserts, such as yoghurt or crème fraîche, where we can only provide cold food from home. We discourage sweet drinks and can provide children with water or diluted fresh fruit juice;
 - 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 as a last resort;
 - provide children bringing packed lunches with plates, cups and cutlery; where applicable.
 - ensure that adults sit with children to eat their lunch so that the mealtime is a social occasion.