Morning Star Nursery Nutrition and Oral Health

Setting's Name:	Morning Star Nursery – Eldon Road
Date Last Reviewed:	06th November 2025
Date of Next Review:	06th November 2026

The EYFS Statutory Framework, (September 2021: 3.48) states where 'children are provided with snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious. Fresh drinking water must be available and accessible to children at all times.

Providers must record and act on information from parents and carers about a child's dietary needs.'

There have also been some minor changes to the safeguarding and welfare section, including a new requirement to promote the good oral health of children. This could include things like talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things, or the importance of brushing your teeth:

3.45 The provider must promote the good health, including the oral health, of children attending the setting.

Rationale

This policy for Nutrition and Oral Health forms a part of the overall policy for developmental learning and delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum at Morning Star.

At Morning Star we believe that it is important to provide an environment where children have the opportunity to develop healthy eating practices from an early age.

We work in partnership with parents/carers, dieticians, the oral health promotion team and other professionals to support and encourage a positive approach to food and oral health.

We have formed good partnership with the local community dentist team who make regular visits to the nursery in order to promote this as well as send parents our nursery menu in which they can

provide a balanced diet for their children when they are at home.

The nursery classroom displays the importance of good oral hygiene and children are read stories which literate the importance of oral hygiene.

The basis of healthy eating is to provide a balance and give opportunities to explore different tastes and textures, without any pressure.

We use lunch times and snacks times as an ideal opportunity to encourage children's language and social skills. Children sit in small groups with familiar adults and are encouraged to develop their self-help skills, independence and their knowledge about healthy eating and different cultural aspects to mealtimes and food.

Staff encourage the children to try a different variety of foods, although their likes and dislikes are always respected.

The children's dietary needs are very important, and all staff must be aware of each child's dietary and medical needs, as well as any allergies. These are displayed in the main nursery classroom, the outdoors classroom.

We believe that good nutrition and a low sugar diet makes a difference to the oral health of the children attending our setting.

In Haringey there is currently a sugar problem. High sugar consumption contributes to tooth decay (the biggest cause of hospital admission for ages 5-9) and excess energy intake, which causes obesity. A significant proportion of London's children have health problems that may affect their wellbeing and future education; almost 1 in 5 children in reception year are overweight or obese and 1 in 4 five-year-olds in London have tooth decay.

We follow the Health Early Years London programme to help reduce health inequalities, by supporting a healthy start to life across themes that include healthy eating, oral and physical health and early cognitive development.

Studies have shown that children who attend a dental surgery have better oral health and their families are more motivated to keep better oral health at home. Some parents/carers believe that children do not need to brush their teeth until their first birthday, but children need to brush with fluoride toothpaste from the
emergence of their first tooth. We support children and their families to develop good oral health practices by working in partnership with Haringey's Oral Health Promotion Team.

Aims

For children to:

- Have healthy snacks that support them to have their 5 portions of fruit / vegetables a day
- Help to grow food in our growing garden so that they can learn about the food chain / cycle
- -Have opportunities to cook with food they have learned about in which we have weekly cooking lessons that explore healthy eating which is encouraged to explore new tastes
- Have a period of relaxation and play after lunch (outside whenever possible) as set out in the Children's Act 1989, so that they are refreshed and ready for the afternoon's activities
- Be given the knowledge to enable them to make appropriate choices regarding their own health

For staff to:

- Educate the children towards becoming healthy adults with a healthy lifestyle
- Work closely with the oral health promotion team to provide oral health advice to parents / carers and activities to support children's oral health
- Encourage good hygiene practices with the children
- Involve parents / carers in positively promoting and establishing healthier eating practices and oral health
- Encourage healthy options when food-based activities are being developed

Objectives
- We will:

- Offer a diverse choice of food, with a low sugar content at snack times and other food-based activity
- Meet the Government's nutritional guidelines for snacks, meals and drinks
- Offer milk and water as drink options for children to access independently at all times.
- Set good examples for the children and act as positive role models
- Provide opportunities for new taste experiences, giving the children time to explore and experiment. with different foods, including food from different cultures.
- Allow children to express their likes and dislikes without undue pressure
- Teach children appropriate ways to request and refuse foods.
- Encourage children to use appropriate cutlery
- Ensure children do not move around with food and sit in an appropriate setting to eat
- Ensure children are given the opportunity to share mealtimes or snacks with other children and adults
- Work with parents / carers to promote healthy eating and oral health
- Encourage children to play outdoors every day to ensure they have an opportunity to be exposed to sunlight, helping their bodies make Vitamin D
- Have a range of real cooking and kitchen role play equipment from different cultures
- Have role play areas to support educating children about healthy eating choices

Mealtimes Guidance for staff

- Nursery practitioners are to:

- Support children in eating their food
- Ensure that if a child has not eaten lunch the lead practitioner has been made aware
- Be aware of children's allergies
- Be aware of and following the packed lunch policy
- Provide water and milk for the children to drink
- Make sure rubbish is placed in the bin not back in the children's packed lunch box
- Provide bowls and cutlery for the children if needed
- Know all of the children's names sitting on your table
- Support the children to clean their faces after eating
- Support the children in purposeful play in the garden once the majority of children have finished eating, those children still eating are to be supervised by a member of staff.
- Develop children's self-care skills and independence by encouraging them to wipe tablecloths and return their chairs
- Place all bowls and cutlery in the dishwasher and leave the kitchen clean
- Place the tables in the original place, sweep the floor and mop up any spillages
- Use good speaking and listening skills with the children to help their language development

Birthdays and other celebrations

- At group time, the birthday child will sit on a special chair covered in beautiful birthday fabric
- The team will provide a birthday crown made by the child on the day.
- The birthday child will be able to blow out candle s on a pretend cake whilst classmates sing ‘happy birthday’
- Staff will take a photo to share on Tapestry with the family
- The child’s family may want to bring in some special snacks to share. The Key Person will discuss with the family what they may like to bring – usually additional fruit (apples) to take home. Other non-sugary, vegetarian suggestions may be acceptable.