Healthy Eating Policy

Our Approach to Food and Nutrition

At Edinburgh Montessori Arts School (EMAS), we recognise that food plays a vital role in children's physical, emotional, and social development. Aligned with the Setting the Table (2023) guidance from NHS Scotland, our healthy eating policy supports balanced nutrition, independence, and lifelong positive food habits.

Snacks and Mealtimes

Infant Community & Children's House

- The school provides healthy snacks such as:
  - Wholegrain rice cakes, oatcakes, or breadsticks
  - Protein-rich dips (e.g. hummus, soft cheese)
  - A wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables
- In Children's House, children help themselves to snacks, set their own place, and wash up afterwards.
- In Infant Community, snack is a social experience shared with staff. Children are involved in preparing snacks.
- Water is always available. Milk is offered to under-fives via the Nursery Milk Scheme.

Elementary

- Children may bring a healthy snack (e.g. fruit, cheese, wholegrain crackers).
- A reusable water bottle is recommended for daily hydration.
- Cooking and baking are regular classroom activities, developing food knowledge and life skills.

Hot Lunch Programme

- EMAS offers a hot vegetarian, nut-free lunch prepared in our school kitchen.
- Menus are designed in line with Setting the Table guidance, and include:
  - Wholegrain carbohydrates (e.g. pasta, couscous, bread)
  - Proteins (e.g. beans, lentils, cheese, eggs)
  - Fresh fruit and vegetables
  - Dairy components (e.g. milk, yoghurt, cheese)
- Ingredients are seasonal and locally sourced where possible—including produce from our own gardens.
- Menus are available in advance via Famly.
- Lunches are booked per term and paid in advance (non-refundable).

Note: While we are vegetarian and nut-free, we cannot cater to every specialised dietary need. Please speak with us about medical or cultural requirements.

Packed Lunch Guidelines

Please Include:

- A carbohydrate (e.g. wholegrain bread, rice, pasta)
- A protein (e.g. beans, cheese, eggs, lentils, tofu)
- At least one fruit and one vegetable
- A dairy item (e.g. yoghurt, cheese) if not already included
- Water is provided during lunch—no juice or fizzy drinks, please.

Warm Foods:

- May be packed in a thermos flask.
- Microwaves are not available for reheating.

Storage:

- If packing perishable items, include an ice pack to keep them cool.
- Grapes and cherry tomatoes must be halved to prevent choking hazards.

Please Avoid:

- Sweets, chocolate, and crisps
- Nut products of any kind (including peanut butter)
- Fizzy drinks or highly processed, sugary foods

Cultural & Medical Dietary Needs

We respect dietary needs related to health, culture, or religion.
Parents should:

- Clearly state any allergies or restrictions on their child's records
- Discuss special requirements with staff
- Provide alternatives where necessary (e.g. oat or soy milk)

Food Education and Child Involvement

- Cooking, gardening, and preparing food are embedded in the curriculum.
- These activities support:
  - Understanding of healthy eating
  - Development of fine motor skills
  - Cultural and environmental awareness
  - Social responsibility and cooperation

Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually to remain in line with current guidance and community needs. We also support families with resources and advice on healthy eating at home.

For questions or support, please speak with your Child's Guide or the School Office.
More information and a sample menu are available on our website under School Life.