

3. Health and Safety Practices

3.5 Food Consumption and Nutrition

Rationale: To ensure that all food and drink provided at Montessori Blenheim is safe, nutritious, and served at appropriate times to support the health, wellbeing, and developmental needs of children while in attendance at Montessori Blenheim.

Objective:

Montessori Blenheim will adhere to the Licencing Criteria for Early Childhood Education & Care Services PF15 and HS19-22, requirements under the Food Act 2014 and is compliant with Reducing food related choking for babies and young children at early learning services - MoE.

Montessori Blenheim promotes healthy eating and encourages parents/caregivers to provide nutritious food choices that support children's growth, wellbeing and learning.

Children have independent access to fresh drinking water at all times throughout the day.

The Practical Life area of the classroom provides regular opportunities for children to participate in food preparation activities, group baking experiences, and shared meals. These experiences support the development of independence, practical skills, and social competence, including the practice of Grace and Courtesy behaviours such as good table manners.

A record of all food served during Montessori Blenheim's hours of operation is maintained and made available for inspection for a minimum of three months.

Kaiārahi are provided with a food safety induction that includes safe food handling practices in accordance with the Food Act 2014.

Procedure:

Our Holistic Approach to Health and Wellbeing:

- Children wash hands, retrieve lunchboxes and drink bottles from their school bags and make their way to the designated lunch area.
- Children serve and feed themselves to support independence, for this reason, we remind parents/caregivers to provide food packaging and lunch and drink containers that children can open and manage on their own.
- Children have independent access to fresh drinking water at all times in both our indoor and outdoor environments. Kaiārahi regularly remind children to drink water, particularly during the summer months.
- Kaiārahi engage children in learning conversations around 'fuelling our bodies', using consistent language during kai times.

- Children are supported to develop an understanding of ‘What is nutrition?’ and ‘What is a nutritious choice?’ and how food provides the nutrients our bodies need for growth, energy, and development.
- Children are empowered to make autonomous decisions about their food choices and how much they need, by listening to their bodies.
- Montessori Blenheim respects each child’s right to choose what and how much they eat. We ask that parents/caregivers provide nutritious lunch options that they would be happy for their child to eat first or as their only choice.
- Children are educated about sustainable food practices and all lunch-related rubbish is returned home inside lunchboxes.
- Food scraps are sorted into appropriate bins for composting, worms, or chickens.
- Through daily routines and intentional learning experiences, children are supported to understand sustainability practices such as reducing waste, composting and growing, harvesting and preparing food.
- For health, safety, and allergy-awareness reasons, families are discouraged from bringing shared food for birthday celebrations.

Dietary requirements and food allergies:

- Individual children’s dietary requirements and food allergies are clearly displayed in both the Main Building kitchen and the Garland House kitchen. This information is reviewed regularly and shared with all kaiārahi, including relievers.
- All kaiārahi are responsible for ensuring children’s dietary requirements and allergies are strictly adhered to when preparing and providing food and drink.
- Children with additional needs who are unable to eat or drink independently will be provided with one-on-one supervision.
- If food or drink is prepared or consumed in a way that may result in cross-contamination with a child’s dietary requirements or allergies, parents/caregivers will be informed and kaiārahi will follow the procedures outlined in **Health and Safety Policy 3.6: Accidents and Injuries**.

Food Preparation activities:

- Kaiārahi who are unwell or experiencing symptoms of illness will not prepare or serve food.
- Food preparation activities at Montessori Blenheim supplement mōrena and ahiahi kai. These activities include preparing nutritious snacks and baking.
- Seasonal produce is collected, harvested and prepared as part of Practical Life and learning experiences offered in Garland House. This produce is consumed during Food Preparation activities, kai times or offered to whānau through the Pātaka.
- Montessori Blenheim complies with *Reducing Food-Related Choking for Babies and Young Children at Early Learning Services* (Ministry of Education).

Kai Register:

- A record of all food and drink served during Montessori Blenheim’s hours of operation will be documented in the Kai Register and available for inspection for a minimum of three months.
- The Kai Register will be kept in the Garland House kitchen and will be accessible to whānau. It will include food and drink provided to supplement children’s lunches, baking, special events and Food Preparation activities.
- The Kai Register will document the date and time food or drink was provided, the purpose for which it was served, the kaiārahi and children involved in its preparation, any dietary

requirements or allergies considered and whether any children were omitted from consuming the food or drink.

Grace and Courtesy:

- Children participate in karakia kai before eating lunch.
- Kaiārahi model safe and respectful eating practices, including remaining seated while eating and chewing food with mouths closed, to minimise choking risk.
- Children are encouraged to eat mindfully, focusing on the enjoyment of food to support safe eating practices and wellbeing.
- Our daily routines include both:
 - Set times for kai, where children engage in social eating experiences
 - Rolling morning and afternoon tea, to encourage independence, autonomy and self-regulation.

Whanaungatanga:

- We ask that parents/caregivers declare any known food allergies or specific health needs on their enrolment form.
- Allergies and health needs are discussed during initial child enrolment interviews and kaiārahi-whānau interviews and are documented in the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Information about *Reducing Food-Related Choking for Babies and Young Children at Early Learning Services* (MoE) is shared with whānau upon enrolment
- Health and nutrition information is provided to whānau during the enrolment process.
- Whānau contribute to curriculum decisions that involve health and wellbeing. This includes opportunities to engage in cultural food experiences.
- We tap into the expertise of our wider learning community.
- Whānau are involved in sporting events.

Last Reviewed on: _____

Signatures:

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