



Nutrition Policy

Adopted by Board of Management: 31st May 2016

Signed: _____

Introductory Statement

The focus of this policy is to support parents and pupils in relation to eating and drinking healthily from an early age.

Aims

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure children eat and drink healthily.

- to develop healthy eating habits
- to help pupils improve concentration, learning and energy levels
- to support parents and children to make healthy decisions around food
- to develop nutritional awareness, i.e. ingredients in food
- to improve dental hygiene
- to enable the child to accept some responsibility for healthy lunch choices.

Healthy Lunch Guidelines

Snacks: Try fruit, raw vegetables, seeds, hummus, wholemeal muffins, scones, standard yogurts (natural or greek preferably), fromage frais, plain rice cakes, crackers, sugar free jelly.

Drinks: Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school. Pure unsweetened juices or well-diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash: 8 parts water) may be included, but only as part of the main lunch meal. Pupils are encouraged to drink the milk provided by the school.

Lunches: Try wholegrain breads, rolls, bagels, tortilla wraps, pitta bread, oatcakes, crackers, pasta, rice. Sandwich fillings include: cheese, cold meats, fish or salad.

Note: Where possible try to give children **WHOLE** food, i.e. preferably unprocessed and natural without added sugars, Read the food labels, avoid high sugars and transfats.

We ask that children **NEVER** bring the following to school:

- crisps
- fizzy drinks
- chewing gum
- chewy/sticky bars
- cereal bars
- popcorn
- biscuits
- lollipops

Pupils have the option of a small treat on Fridays. Treats should be small in size, as it is known that treat foods are high in sugar, fat and salt. Size guide: 2 biscuits/mini muffin/fun size treat. If treat foods are included as part of a pupil's lunch Monday to Thursday, pupils will be asked to bring them home and the milk and fruit, already provided by the school, will be made available to them.

Sweet treats are permitted on special occasions decided on by the school, such as the class school tour, pizza parties and end-of-term parties. Children may be asked to bring their lunchboxes on outings, as sweet treats would generally not be allowed on these occasions.

When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer – e.g. Holy Communion party, Graduation party.

Sweet treats for birthdays such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags, etc. should be kept for home celebrations. In the school setting, there may be so many birthdays that sweet treats are available nearly every day.

There are a small number of pupils presenting with nut/fish allergies. At the start of the school year parents of the particular class in question will be advised of this and asked not to include fish or nut products in their daughters' lunchboxes.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, recognise great effort by providing non-food rewards (e.g. line-leader, no homework, school announcement, letter home etc.).

Implementation

This policy will be communicated to all parents. It is recommended to be read in conjunction with our information leaflet on healthy eating (see attached)

Review

This policy will be reviewed in January 2017 and every two years thereafter. The policy will be available in the school. It will also be available for download from our school website.

Information Sheet for Parents

Research has shown that healthy young people are more likely to learn effectively.

LUNCH is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage). We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

We provide fruit free of charge to the pupils in our school.

DRINKS

Milk and water are tooth-friendly. These are the best drinks for children and should be given during and between meals. Try to keep unsweetened fruit juice for meal times. Remember to look at labels when buying drinks to make sure you are making a tooth-friendly choice.

Did you know there is a big difference between fruit 'juices' and fruit 'drinks'? Fruit 'drinks' contain a fruit flavour only and lots of added sugar. Pure fruit 'juices' have lots of healthy fruit juice and no added sugar.

Be SUGAR Smart

Harmful sugars hidden in foods are not easy to identify. If you look at ingredient labels you might be surprised that products saying 'no artificial additives', 'low fat', or 'healthy' may contain a large amount of added sugar. The sugar names are: sucrose, glucose, corn syrup, fructose, maltose, dextrose and fruit sugar. Products labelled as being 'low in sugar' may only be low in sucrose sugar and high in other sugars! Some products saying 'no added sugar' may contain fruit sugars instead of sucrose and can still be harmful.

Extracted from Mighty Mouth Infant Curriculum which was developed by the Dental Health Foundation of Ireland in collaboration with HSE.

Did you know? Raisins should be eaten as part of the main lunch only. They contain too much sugar to be eaten without other food.

Sugar is now widely recognised as the number 1 cause of obesity and T2 diabetes as it completely disregulates appetite. Children and young adults are becoming obese at a much younger age than 10 and 20 years ago. Added sugar is widespread in the food that is marketed at our children and should be reduced if at all possible. Even very active children cannot outrun a bad diet. The number one cause of mild and severe pain in young children is from tooth decay which is caused by sugar exposure.

CALCIUM

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yogurt, etc. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. A cheese sandwich, yogurt or yogurt drinks or homemade milk shakes can help provide important calcium. Rice pudding and custard can also be a source of milk.

We provide milk free of charge to the pupils in our school.

NOTE: Updates on new Food Pyramid include a change to the milk, yogurt and cheese shelf: **now 5 servings daily for 9-18 years.**

Research tells us... National Children's Food Survey (5-12 year olds)(2003-2004) 37% of girls had inadequate calcium intakes. National Teen's Food Survey (2005-2006) 42% of girls had inadequate calcium intakes.

Extracts of this leaflet reproduced from:

Healthy Tooth Drinks produced by Community Nutrition and Dietary Service & Dental Service, H.S.E., Dublin Mid-Leinster

HII – Healthy Ireland - HealthPromotingSchools: Information for Schools – Schools for Health in Europe and HSE

and Healthy Eating Policy Development Training – hI and HSE.

Useful website links

www.healthpromotion.ie

www.safefood.eu

www.irishheart.ie (Food label shopping cards are excellent and can be ordered free in shop section).

www.dentalhealth.ie