

# St. Patrick's SNS Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme (SPHE) at St. Patrick's Senior School, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes (Sorhaindo and Feinstein 2006; Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum 2008).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy starting from September 2013.

## **Aims**

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

## **Objectives**

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, developing and staying healthy.
2. To raise the child's awareness of healthy eating so to enable them to make wise food choices and adopt a healthy, balanced diet.

We ask parents and guardians to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children;

## **Bread & Alternatives**

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal  
Rice – wholegrain  
Pasta – wholegrain  
Potato Salad  
Wholemeal Scones  
Bread sticks  
Crackers  
Pitta bread  
Plain rice cakes

## **Fruit & Vegetables**

Apples, Banana, Peach  
Mandarins, Orange segments,  
Fruit Salad, Dried Fruit, Coleslaw  
Carrot, tomato, Sweetcorn

## **Savouries**

Lean Meat  
Chicken/Turkey  
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines  
Cheese  
Quiche  
Hummus

## **Drinks**

Milk  
Plain water  
Probiotic drinks (no Yops)

***Children are allowed to sip their milk or water throughout the school day at anytime.***

### **A Word About Milk**

We provide milk free of charge to pupils in our school. Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

### **Breakfast Club**

High sugar cereals will not be served in our Breakfast Clubs. Please note we will provide juice with children's breakfasts but it is not allowed to be brought to school as a drink. The Breakfast Club is open from 08.30 - 08.50 each morning.

### **We ask that children do not bring the following to school:**

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Yop drinks
- Sweets or chocolate
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn
- Cake
- No fast-food

If a child brings any of the above foods or any drink other than milk or water (unless agreed with the Principal), it will be taken from them and returned at the end of the day. Children are provided with filtered water and healthy food in school each day.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

### **A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:**



### **Portion Sizes**

Although we might choose healthy snacks and food - our portion sizes are often too large! It is important when choosing meals to refer to the food pyramid or for more information go to [http://www.obesityireland.ie/healthy\\_living5.html](http://www.obesityireland.ie/healthy_living5.html)

### **Treat Days and Rewards**

Treats will be allowed in school on the last day of every term, special occasions and at the principal's discretion. Treats will not be given as rewards.

### **Green Schools**

Children are asked to:

- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food and packaging
- not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

### **References**

Sorhaindo, A. And L. Feinstein (2006) What is the relationship between child nutrition and school outcomes? *Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 18*, Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning. Available from <http://www.learningbenefits.net/Publications/ResReps/ResRep18.pdf>

Associate Parliamentary Food and Health Forum, 2008. *The Links Between Diet and Behaviour: The influence of nutrition on mental health*. Available from [http://www.foodforthebrain.org/content.asp?id\\_Content=1767](http://www.foodforthebrain.org/content.asp?id_Content=1767)

### **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's S.N.S.