



St Catherine's National School
Donore Avenue
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 4542679
info@stcatherinesns.net
www.stcatherinesns.net

Whole School Healthy Eating Policy

1. Introduction

St Catherine's NS has had a Healthy Eating Policy for a number of years. In 2018, it was decided to review this policy in line with current healthy eating guidelines. As part of our research and data gathering, parents participated in an online survey regarding the Friday treat. 124 parents responded to this survey.

2. Relationship to the Ethos of the school

St. Catherine's NS is a primary school under the patronage and ethos of the Church of Ireland, with a spirit of caring for every member of the school community. The objective of this policy is to educate each child about healthy eating choices so that they bring these skills into their daily lives now and into the future. Our school is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enables all to make informed choices about all aspects of food and not just the lunchbox. The staff, parents, children and Board of Management have been involved in creating this policy. It will be reviewed every 2 years. The key documents that were relevant to developing and guiding this policy document include Irish Healthy Eating Guidelines, SPHE policy Irish Food Pyramid and Healthy Lifestyles Circular 0013/2016.

3. Vision and Aims

- to promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum
- to ensure that food provision in school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils, e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- to make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience
- To take a whole school approach to food in school

4. Environment

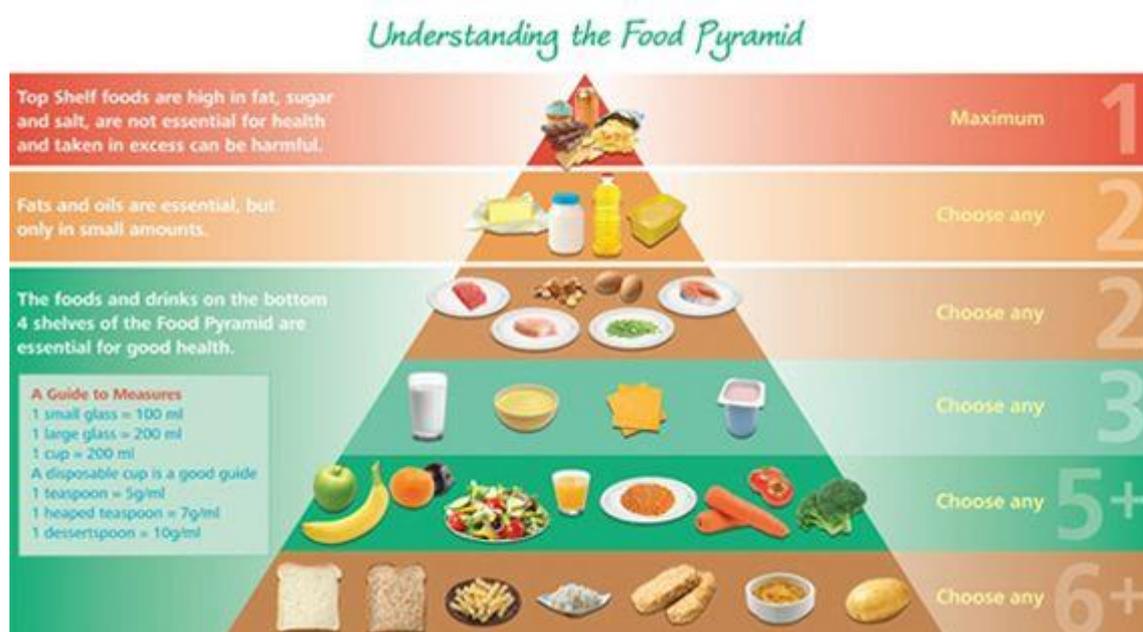
Lunch Breaks

The children, at present, have two breaks at which they eat their lunches. It is hoped that the children will be both encouraged by their peers and enticed by the variety of fruit and

vegetables they will see being consumed around them, to try various healthy options and eventually find some that they like to eat.

Children must bring home all food that is not eaten during the school day. It is important that parents check their child's lunch box to monitor what their child has eaten. It is essential that children come to school with a freshly packed lunch every day.

Lunches/Snacks Suggestions



Suggestions for lunches include the following and would ideally include a piece of food from the four main shelves of the Food Pyramid:

- Sandwiches, rolls, wraps
- Filled rolls (of all types)
- Wraps, pitta breads, bagels, scones
- Crackers and cheese
- Yogurt, yogurt drinks and fromage frais (excluding chocolate ones)
- Cheese of any kind
- Fruit or vegetables of any kind
- Pasta, spaghetti or rice in small containers

- Combination of foods – i.e. Slices of pizza or quiche
- Slices, cubes of chopped meat, chicken, fish or hard-boiled eggs.

**Yogurts should be of suitable size and easy for infants to eat without spilling.

Suggestions for Healthy Break are as follows:

Fruit

- Any whole piece of fruit
- Chopped fruit
- Dried fruit

** It is important that any food is made easy for infants to eat.

Vegetables

- Chopped peppers, carrots, celery sticks, cucumber etc
- Baby tomatoes or other whole baby vegetables

Due to many children and staff presenting with nut allergies, no chocolate spread, nut butters or bars containing nuts or nut products are permitted on the premises at any time.

Drinks

It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. Almost 2/3 of the body is made up of water. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Recent studies have shown that children who are dehydrated are less able to concentrate properly, especially at subjects like Maths. Therefore, we would recommend that every child bring a drink of water each day. Where a child brings more than one drink to school each day, one should be water.

Drinks that are encouraged are tooth friendly drinks, as follows:

- Water
- Milk (no flavoured milk)

We do not allow juice or juice drinks for three main reasons: storage of open cartons, the sugar content of these drinks and the environmental impact of plastic.

Sugar & Friday treat

After the parental response to the online survey, the Friday treat has been discontinued. We strongly discourage food of any kind which is predominantly sugar – e.g. fruit winders, cereal bars etc.

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is a good start to a child's day and gives them the energy they need to concentrate, learn and participate fully in school activities. Therefore, we would encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast before coming to school.

Hygiene

Pupils in our school will be aware of the importance of food hygiene and safety, when preparing and eating lunches, e.g. washing hands, have clean lunch boxes and organising them well on the trollies and in bags are all skills which are encouraged.

Environmental issues

In keeping with our ongoing environmental awareness, a Healthy Eating Policy will reduce the amount of litter in the school and will give the pupils an understanding of how people affect the world around them and how they can improve it.

In doing this, we will encourage the pupils to cut down on litter produced by packed lunches e.g. using resealable/reusable bottles instead of cartons or re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings. We wish to limit the use of single use plastics. Any packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal. Any uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

Birthdays/Parties

At St. Catherine's National School, we do not allow party bags, cakes or sweets. Handing these out takes up a lot of teaching and learning time throughout the year and can put pressure on other parents to supply sweets and treats on their child's birthday. The child's birthday will be mentioned over the intercom and each class teacher may have their own way of marking the event. School staff cannot be responsible for handing out party invitations. Parents must do this in a subtle manner outside the building.

5. Curriculum & Planning

- Students will achieve the learning outcomes set out in the SPHE Curriculum which are consistent with healthy eating messages in other subjects, e.g. PE, Science, etc.
- Students will develop the life skills to make informed decisions about healthy lifestyles.
- Regular staff professional development will be available to all teachers.
- Our school uses healthy eating resources from reputable agencies for students, staff and parents
- The school will ensure that any external agencies, that the school may choose to compliment the SPHE curriculum, follow the guidelines in Circular 0042/2018.

6. Policy & Planning

- This policy links to other school policies/curriculum areas, e.g. SPHE, PE, Science, Geography, Health and Safety, English, Irish, Maths etc.
- Sufficient time allocated for lunch, 5 minutes for small break to eat and 10 for big break. Children may take lunch in to the yard if they have not finished.
- The school milk scheme is also available and Glan Bia provide sandwiches and fruit for any child who may need it.

7. Partnerships

- Parents Association events e.g. providing healthy refreshments at Sports Day etc.
- Communication with parents/staff/BOM of new /revised food policy healthy eating material
- External partners that support school curriculum – sporting partners, etc.
- After school activities in schools

8. Key Measures

- Healthy Eating covered as outlined in the SPHE curriculum outcomes
- Staff attending professional updating/training
- Only use of non food rewards during school
- Proportion of lunchtime given to social time/non eating time for all

9. Communication

- A draft of the policy will be communicated to parents via email for feedback.
- The policy will be ratified by the Board of Management.

- The parents will receive an emailed copy of the final policy and it will be available on the website.
- It will be reviewed every 2 years. A survey may be used and/or child centred focus groups.
- Everyone in the school environment (students, staff and parents) has a responsibility to make the policy work. The AP2 post holder for SPHE will continue to co-ordinate the policy with the other stakeholders.

10. What will happen if students/staff/parents don't support the policy during implementation?

The intention is that every child will bring and eat a healthy lunch. However, it is not possible to legislate for every item in a lunchbox. Therefore, the ideal situation is where the student asks parents to help with preparing and packing a healthy lunch thereby reminding parents of the healthy lunch options. These are the skills that are sustainable and will benefit children long after they leave primary school, especially when they enter the world of choice at post-primary level.

Resistant school community members could be reminded using the Healthy Lifestyles Circular 13/2016 that puts an onus on schools to provide an environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle.

11. Success Criteria

- Children having a healthy learning experience
- Children making better informed choices about food and lifestyle
- Less food and packaging waste
- Teacher/Parent Satisfaction

12. Review & Evaluation

A Healthy Food Audit can be conducted at this time to check for success.

Review date : June 2020

Signed :

