

St Mary's N.S. Healthy Lunch Guidelines

Rationale

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme in St Mary's N.S., we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. We are committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life. The children will continue to receive consistent messages regarding healthy eating both at home and at school. In addition, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The Science curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops.

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). A balanced diet will enhance a child's chances of achieving his/her potential.

In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a bottle of water.

A Word About Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. Milk is a rich source of protein, calcium, vitamins and minerals. If your child wishes to have milk in school please fill out the Milk Order Form in September.

Aims of this policy are:

To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.

To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, developing and staying healthy.

To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

What could be in a healthy lunch?

- Sandwiches or rolls with cheese, meat, fish or salad.
- Pitta bread, crackers
- Raisins
- Fruit – apple, oranges, banana, grapes, pear, plum, peach, apricots, melon, grapefruit, pineapple, strawberries, raspberries, mango, blackberries or blueberries. Remember to peel and/or cut fruit and vegetables into bite-sized pieces for younger children
- Raw vegetables – tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, carrot sticks, celery sticks, broccoli, cabbage or cucumber
- Hot leftovers in a flask – curry, pasta (with or without sauce), soup/chowder, baked beans, rice, stew, lasagne or noodles
- Cold leftovers
- Pasta
- Salad
- Sugar free Yoghurt

What should not be in a healthy lunch?

- Crisps, salted nuts or popcorn (unless home-made and salt free)
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies
- Chewing gum
- Cake, biscuits, pastries or doughnuts
- Chocolate spread
- Fizzy drinks, Powerade, Lucozade Sport, Prime
- Flavoured milk

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?

- Water
- Diluted sugar free juice drinks

- Milk
- Smoothies

What drinks should not be allowed?

- Fizzy drinks, Powerade, Lucozade Sport, Prime

On Fridays, children are permitted to bring in **one child portion** treat.

Benefits of a good diet:

- Ensures the development of healthy hair, skin, teeth, muscles and strong bones
- Provides energy and aids concentrate
- Strengthens the immune system

Roles and Responsibilities in implementing our policy:

- Parents are responsible for providing a healthy school lunch for their child(ren).
- Children are encouraged to participate in making their own healthy school lunch.
- Teachers will explicitly teach about healthy eating as part of the SPHE curriculum.

St. Mary's NS Healthy Eating Policy is available on our website, as a hard copy from the office and by post if requested.

Signed Eileen Byrne Date 14/6/23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed PJ Nolan Date 14/6/23

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

