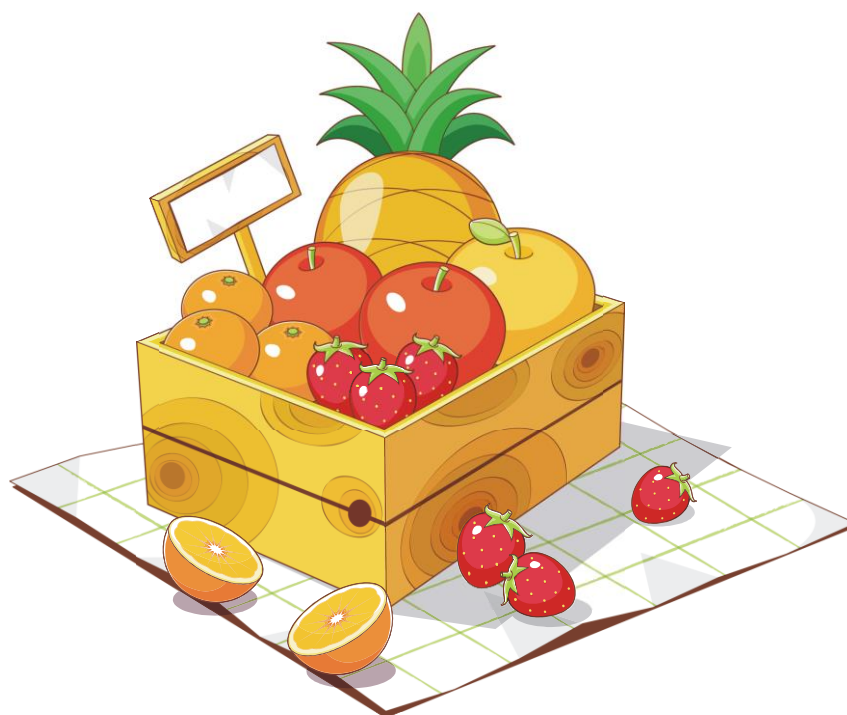


St. Patrick's Primary & Nursery School Mayobridge



Food in Schools: Healthy Eating & Drinking Policy

November 2016

Rationale

St. Patrick's Primary & Nursery School is committed to promoting a whole school approach in "Healthy food for Healthy Outcomes" as identified in *"Every School a Good School"* (DE) and School Food: The Essential Guide 2015 . We believe that good nutrition is essential for children to grow properly, do their best in school and be healthy and happy in the future. We define Healthy Food as: *"Food low in salt and sugar, high in fibre e.g. Fruit and vegetables, lean meat, eggs, milk bread, potatoes and pasta"*.

We envisage the School Governors, Staff, School Meals Service, children and families working together to ensure that the children in our school are helped to become healthier.

Aims

To work in partnership with families and professional outside agencies to support our children to develop healthy eating practices, this will become embedded for life.

To ensure that food provided in school is healthy.

To help children learn about food – a) how it grows b) where it comes from c) the different types of food that make up a balance diet

To raise awareness with children to develop a positive approach to food nutrition and oral health education.

To promote positive attitudes towards healthy eating and oral health as necessary and enjoyable aspects of children's lives in order to help them make independent and informed choices.

To encourage responsibility of parents/carers in offering healthy choices to our children.

What are the values that inform this policy?

We want the children to understand that good, nutritious food is essential to their ability to learn as well as for their long-term health.

We want the children to apply their knowledge about food and make healthy choices both in and out of school.

We believe that every adult at St. Patrick's Primary school can play a part in making sure that the children develop positive attitudes to food, make informed choices and enjoy eating healthily.

We believe that food has a role in developing young people's social skills.

We want children to have an opportunity to experience cooking healthy food and learn some core skills by the time they leave the school.

Catering

An annual meeting occurs between the School Principal, the School Cook and the SELB School Meals Area Supervisor at the beginning of the school year.

The School Cook provides information for parents of new Primary One children annually regarding Healthy Eating and Nutritional Standards (in conjunction with SELB and Public Health Agency).

The Schools Meals Service in our school follow specific “standards” as directed by the SELB Catering Section. These “Standards” have been formulated to determine the appropriate types of food and how often they should be provided within the children’s diet.

Special dietary needs and food allergies

We are sensitive to the catering needs of children with specific dietary needs. We appreciate that for some children food is particularly significant in their lives because they have a disability or an allergy or food is related to their culture or religion. Parents will be asked about any special dietary requirements their child has before their child starts school. Parents of children who have special diets (for example a gluten-free diet) or who have food intolerances are responsible for providing the school with information about their diet and choices available to the child via the School Information Sheets. We update our records regularly.

Water in school

Children have access to free and fresh water throughout the school day, this keeps thirst away, is tooth friendly and can help children concentrate.

Children in P6-P7 are encouraged to bring in their own water bottles into their classroom and are allowed to drink water whenever they feel thirsty.

Children from Nursery to Primary Five have access to drinking water in their classrooms.

Children who eat hot lunch have water or milk on their tables.

Food throughout the School Day:

Breakfast

We recognise the importance of eating a balanced breakfast and realise that it is hard to concentrate on learning and maintaining energy levels without breakfast. Research has proven that eating breakfast is beneficial to educational performance during the school day.

Morning break

Healthy break procedures are discussed and regularly agreed to at a whole staff level. Parents are updated appropriately.

Parents are encouraged to provide a healthy break for their child/children. See Appendix 1 '*Healthy breaks for schools*' for suitable/ not suitable suggestions.

The school provides Nursery and Primary One children with a healthy snack and drink at break time, thus establishing good eating and drinking habits from an early age. Milk is provided free of charge in the Nursery.

A healthy break is promoted and managed at this stage, thus establishing good practice from the onset and is monitored appropriately. P2 – 7 children are encouraged to eat a healthy break.

Parents are given the opportunity to purchase fruit for their children every Tuesday and Thursday from the School caters.

Lunch Time

We aim to provide our children with good quality, healthy food and we actively promote healthy choices.

The Weekly Menu is on display for the children in the corridor and in the classroom and a Monthly Menu is sent home to the parents.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunch time. This is achieved by:

- Sitting freely with their friends.
- Eating packed lunches and school dinners in the same vicinity.
- Adults helping younger children to cut up their food.
- Being encouraged to try a variety of food at lunch times to develop a balanced diet.
- Being mindful that food waste should be minimal
- Entering and leaving the dining hall in an orderly way, to show respect for those who are eating.
- Saying please and thank you to the Dinner Ladies.
- Ensuring that the lunchtime routine is monitored on an ongoing basis to minimise “queuing up” for dinners i.e. maximising play/exercise time in the playground.

Food After School

The school provides healthy snacks for children participating in some after school activities, such as Numeracy and Literacy Club and Primary One/Two 2-3 pm Club.

Food in the Curriculum

We exploit opportunities within the existing curriculum to discuss and work with food. We recognise that food has great potential for cross-curricular work. Formal food and health education is delivered via the World Around Us (Science): Healthy diet, teeth, exercise, food and hygiene. There are also Food related topics in PDMU and the Grow In Love/Alive-O Series. The school has access to a variety of resources to help teach the children about Healthy eating and Healthy lifestyles e.g. www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/5
www.Schoolmeals/food-in-schools-resources.htm

We encourage our children to support their parents in making healthy choices when purchasing food based on what they have learnt and experienced in school. Furthermore we promote the support of our children's emotional health and wellbeing throughout their primary years.

Teaching and Learning

In Nursery and Primary One classes, staff will be present with children during their snack time to provide good role modelling, lead conversation and encourage good manners and eating skills.

Food and cooking activities are used in a variety of ways to teach children important Life Skills and widen their experience of food i.e. giving them the opportunity to touch, taste, smell and feel a variety of foods. (e.g. Fruit Week linked to European Day of Languages, Pancake Tuesday etc). Regarding special occasions e.g. Birthdays, we ask parents not to send in cakes, buns, sweets etc as they may contain traces of nuts.

As well as encouraging healthy eating skills in our school, we promote the importance of exercising by providing a wide range of sporting activities both after school and throughout the existing curriculum. The school has recently introduced a Home/School collaboration initiative for daily physical exercise and continues to incorporate/embrace community schemes promoting healthy lifestyles.

Supporting the school community

The annual Induction Programme for new parents involves a session on Healthy Eating and Lifestyles. All new Nursery and Primary One children are provided with a school booklet which contains information about Healthy snacks and the importance of exercise. P2 –P7 staff avail of the Parent Information Meetings in September to remind parents/guardians about the importance of providing their children with food that is healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Guidance on every part of the Food in Schools' Policy is available at www.publichealth.hscni.net/publication/school-food-essential guide
Parents can access more information about healthy lunches.

Monitoring and Evaluating this policy.

The effective implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Healthy Lifestyle Co-ordinator, the Principal and the Governing body.

The policy will be evaluated every two years through an audit of the views of the whole school community, particularly the views of pupils (via the School Council, School Forum, Assemblies and Class Discussion).

This Policy is due for renewal in November 2018.

Signed: M. Ryan (Principal)

N. Lynchehaun (Chairperson of Governors)

Ratified: March 2017

Appendix 1

We encourage suitable healthy break snacks:

- Pieces of fresh fruit, e.g. banana, melon, strawberries, apples etc;
- Fruits pots of sliced or chopped fruit;
- Canned fruit in natural juices;
- Salad pots;
- Vegetable sticks with a low-fat dip;
- Raw vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, celery, peppers and cucumber;
- Bread or pancakes with a thin spread of margarine;
- Scones (plain or wholemeal), dried fruit (not glace cherries) with a thin spread of margarine;
- Breakfast cereals with semi-skimmed milk;
- Plain breadsticks or crackers with a dairy, fruit or vegetable portion;
- Sandwiches;
- Filled bagels, baguettes, pitta bread or rolls;
- Tortilla wraps;
- Toasted sandwiches, Paninis;
- Water, milk, unsweetened fruit juices
- Yoghurts

We discourage:

- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Lollies
- Crisps
- Sugar/ fizzy drinks
- Cakes
- Biscuits

Remember!!! - NO BREAK IS A HEALTHY BREAK