



Healthy Eating Policy



Introductory Statement

Good nutrition is essential for school children. Physical activity is integral to any healthy eating programme and hence should also be promoted and encouraged.

In consultation with the Principal and staff, a sub-committee of the parents association reviewed and updated the school's healthy eating policy. The involvement of teachers, parents and older children (each important role models) in drawing up the policy ensures that children receive consistent messages both at home and at school.

Rationale

- Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of children and as such is part of the holistic education that Scoil San Treasa advocates in its education philosophy and mission statement. The adoption of a whole school approach ensures that healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of school life.
- Healthy eating is part of the SPHE (social, personal and health education) food and nutrition curriculum programme for each primary school class. Research suggests that the provision of nutritious school food enhances not only the child's health but also allows the child to take full advantage of the education provided by improving attention levels and concentration spans.
- Key healthy eating messages that are consistent and fact based assist children in decision making and forming of attitudes and beliefs around healthy eating.

Aims

- To assist all involved in our school community-children, parents and staff to develop positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good foods make to health.
- To improve the opportunities for our children to grow into healthy adults and to heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet.
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage children to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons etc.

Guidelines

A Healthy Lunchbox & healthy snack for small break

- A healthy lunchbox includes food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid.
- Healthy choice of **drink** include water, milk and fruit juices. No fizzy drinks allowed. (yogurts/yogurt drinks not recommended in infant classes for practical reasons)
- The following **foods are not allowed at any time**: crisps, chewing gum, lollipops, fizzy or energy drinks.
- Parents should inform the school if a child is on a special diet or has an allergy i.e. nut. Once teachers are aware of a child's special needs they can advise against swapping and sharing of food.
- "Treats" allowed on Fridays only. I.e. one treat in the lunch box. (fun size bars, biscuits, sweets)

Healthy School Environment

- Through the parents committee every effort will be made to communicate with and encourage parents to support the healthy eating policy.
- The sub-committee will source and use means to promote this policy e.g. posters, leaflets, the food pyramid, outside speakers and agencies.
- National campaigns can be used as opportunities to focus on healthy eating messages. (The school's participation in the Food Dudes programme coincides with the introduction of this revised policy). The school may organise a healthy eating week periodically to highlight the policy.
- Children eat their lunch while supervised in classrooms. They are permitted to bring uneaten food to finish in the yard.
- Children are encouraged to drink water/fluids at specified times during the school day.

Success Criteria

We will know that the policy is effective if the awareness of the school community is heightened and if all children bring healthy lunches to school.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents play an essential role in helping shape children's eating habits and attitudes towards physical activity. Parents are encouraged to send children to school with a healthy lunch.

Teachers will monitor the progress of the policy in their own classroom. The teacher will send home any food not allowed as per guidelines, along with any uneaten food. (Children are asked to bring packaging home under Green Schools guidelines)

Timeframe for Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented during final term of the 2009-2010 school year and will be reviewed in January 2011.

Responsibility for review

The sub-committee that drafted the policy will take responsibility for review and assessing it, in consultation with principal, staff, parents and pupils.

Ratification and Communication

A draft of this policy is now published on the website. Comments and suggestions were already sought from staff and from the Parents Association. Parents and pupils are now invited to review the policy and to e-mail comments to the principal

The Board of Management will formally ratify the policy in September.