

St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit



Healthy Eating Policy

Signature of Chairperson _____

Signature of Principal _____

Date _____

St Mary's Primary School

Our Mission Statement

“St Mary's Primary School will be a welcoming, child centred school and a community of good practice, where all feel valued and inspired. Our excellent staff will collaborate to meet the aspirations of our pupils through high quality learning and teaching. We will work in partnership with our parents, parish and community to meet the needs of our children in this rapidly changing global society. Our Catholic ethos, pastoral care and family atmosphere will permeate every aspect of school life to ensure the well being and safety of every child. We will endeavour to support each child to reach their full potential

Article 24 – Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poor countries achieve this

Introduction

We believe that healthy eating and healthy attitudes to food are vital to the physical and mental wellbeing of both our children and the adults at St. Mary's. For this reason, we believe food education has a key role in our curriculum and the daily life of the school.

What are the aims of this policy?

- To make explicit the values and guidelines that underpin every aspect of food culture in St. Mary's Primary school.
- To ensure that our children receive consistent and coherent messages about food and its role in their long-term health.
- Develop a positive attitude towards eating habits.
- Provide opportunities within school to pursue a healthy diet.
- Help children to understand that some foods should be eaten in moderation.

Why a policy is needed?

We recognise the important part a healthy diet plays for a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn effectively and achieve.

We believe that the school, in partnership with parents and carers, can make a major contribution to improving children and young people's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food and helping them to make healthy food choices.

What are the values that inform this policy?

- We believe that every adult at St. Mary's can play a part in making sure that the children develop positive attitudes to food, make informed choices and enjoy eating healthily.
- We want the children to understand that good, nutritious food is essential to their ability to learn as well as to 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 want the children to enjoy cooking and learn certain core skills by the time they leave the school.
- We believe that food has a role in developing young people's social skills.

Success Criteria

Through the successful implementation of this policy the intended outcomes are:

- Children are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.
- Children are making informed choices about their lunches, both school dinners and packed lunches
- Children understand the need for a balanced diet, understand the term 'in moderation'
- For staff to be good role models and have access to information which will help them to provide and develop positive attitudes to healthy eating in young children

In drafting this policy, Education Authority Catering Services have been consulted and will continue to have a pivotal role in implementing this policy. Consultation has taken place through meetings and discussions via the school Council.

Article 3 – The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all actions concerning children

Responsibility

The overall responsibility for food in school lies with the Principal.

All individual food needs - children with allergies or eating disorders - are entered on the medical records and updated regularly.

The kitchen staff are kept informed by the Senior Lunchtime Supervisor Mrs Flanagan in the Senior School and Mrs Roarty in the Junior School.

In addition, First Aiders names are listed at first aid points around the school.

Staff are made aware of particular allergies through child display in the staff room. Further information on this subject can be obtained through contacting the school nurse.

The Health Education Coordinator, Mrs O'Hara will monitor healthy eating in school and will continue to train, deliver and hand out resources to all staff within the school.

Definition of Healthy Eating/Nutrition

A healthy diet is one which allows for a balance of different foods that sustain the wellbeing of the individual. Different lifestyles result in different dietary needs and individuals need to be aware of these and the effects of different foods on their bodies. A healthy, balanced diet may vary between individuals from different cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds.

Curriculum

In Foundation stage, KS1 and KS2, healthy eating is addressed through:

- PDMU
- WAU
- RE
- Discrete teaching sessions- in class and through Extended Schools Programme
- Discussion between teacher and pupils
- Whole school projects-liasing with external agencies
- Special days and events

Fluid/Hydration

- Children have access to fresh water throughout the school day. Children are encouraged to bring their own water bottles into their classrooms and are allowed to drink water whenever they feel thirsty.
- Children are encouraged to drink water during the day as children are able to concentrate better if they are having the recommended fluid intake per day. The guide would be 6-8cups of fluid per day per child:
Age 5-8yrs 160-180ml cups
Age 10-12 200-220ml cups.

Food throughout the school day/year:

- We ask that no foods containing nuts etc. are brought into the school in order to protect children with allergies.
- Sweets should not be used as a reward by adults working in the school, or as a treat to give out on birthdays.
- Special events such as Christmas parties are times when food contributes to a sense of celebration. On these occasions foods other than fruit and vegetables may will remind children that it is an occasional treat for a special occasion.

Before and After School

- We discourage parents from providing children with sweets, chocolates and fizzy drinks on the school premises.

Article 5 – Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide and advise their child so that, as they grow, they learn to apply their rights properly

Breakfast

- We recognise the importance of eating a balanced breakfast and realise that it is hard to concentrate on learning and maintain energy levels without breakfast. Breakfast club runs daily from 8.20am – 8.45am. A varied selection of hot and cold, healthy and nutritious food is available, e.g. Cereal, toast, milk, fruit juice. Pupils can attend if they have already eaten at home as long as the fee is paid. Breakfast club is monitored and checked regularly and meets the National Nutritional Standards legal requirement.

Training

All kitchen staff and selected staff from Breakfast club undergo the relevant food hygiene and nutrition training. Certificates are displayed in the kitchen.

Break Time

At mid morning break children are encouraged to bring in a portion of fruit, vegetable, yoghurt, custard pot, a maximum of 2 dry, plain biscuits or a sandwich. Milk is available to all children at a small charge. Nursery children are provided with milk daily free of charge.

Water

Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. The school currently has a fridge in the Senior School. Water bottles can be purchased at the cost of 50p or children can also bring in suitable containers from home. Throughout lunchtime water or fruit drinks are available in the canteen.

Children are encouraged to take water bottles home daily and wash them.

Lunch Time – hot lunch in the dinner hall

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

The school refers to EA Catering to ensure that provision is met. The dinner system offers a choice of foods, which allows the pupils to exercise their knowledge of healthy eating. The menu is displayed on the Parents and Pupil Notice boards respectively and on the school website. A copy of the menu is also sent out to all families promoting and encouraging children to eat school dinners. Theme days are also promoted throughout the year through advertising on posters, fliers and the school newsletter – e.g. Halloween Feast, Christmas Dinner, Easter menu.

At regular intervals the Class/School Council will discuss school meals and

feedback the children's views. Meetings are also arranged with the School Cook, EA Catering and the School Council to discuss children's opinions and ideas for new menus. The food complies with the School Food Trust Nutrient Based Standards.

Lunch Time – packed lunches

- Our caterers provide packed lunches for school trips in accordance with their own healthy eating policy.

Information on packed lunches is provided for those children who do not eat school meals through School Prospectus and curriculum. Monitoring of packed lunches takes place informally by lunch time supervisors. Any uneaten food is returned in the child's lunch boxes so the parents can be aware of what the child has eaten whilst at school. Individual monitoring/observation can also take place on parental request.

A healthy packed lunch should contain a mix of foods from the Eat Well plate. The Eat Well Plate shows how much should be eaten from each of the five food groups.

A good packed lunch contains:

- A starchy food, such as bread, rolls, pitta bread, naan bread, potatoes, rice, noodles. These are good to fill children up.
- A good source of protein, iron, and zinc such as meat, fish, beans, nuts and eggs
- A good source of calcium such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage fraise and custard.
- And one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad to provide other vitamin and minerals

A small treat - fun size chocolate bar / small packet of sweets, biscuit or bun is allowed in the lunch bags. This is carefully monitored.

No single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently so it is important that the content of a packed lunch is varied.

Special Events

The school ensures that healthy options are available at special events, like Christmas parties.

If a child brings a birthday cake to school or a bag of sweets back from holiday, these are divided up for distribution at home time. On occasions cake sales occur to raise money for school fund or charity events.

Cooking/food tasting in lessons

On occasions as part of the class lesson the children participate in cooking and food tasting. Cooking clubs may be offered as part of the Extended Schools Programme.

Dining environment

Lunch is served in the canteen using a staggered lunch hour:

Nursery – Melmount Site – 12.00-12.45pm

Nursery – Ballycolman Site – 12.15- 1.00pm

Foundation Stage 12.00pm – 12.45pm

Key Stage1 12.45pm – 1.30pm- Junior School

Upper Key Stage2 –Year 7 12.30pm – 1.15pm- Senior School

Lower Key Stage 2-Year 5/6- 12.45-1.30pm- Senior School

The children enter the canteen in an orderly manner, are seated and a rota is followed in the Senior School to allow for different classes to take turns when receiving their dinner- See Canteen Rota

School lunches are eaten in identified lunchrooms- see Lunch Schedule

Other staff members are encouraged to take the opportunity to sample school lunches and sit with the children.

Displays are situated in the hall to remind children of lunchtime expectations.

Lunchtime supervisor support

Lunchtime supervisors are employed to support children both in the hall and on the playground. Each class is allocated a lunchtime supervisor, where the lunchtime supervisor follows a rota basis to ensure the smooth and efficient running of lunchtime activities. Lunchtime supervisors are encouraged to recognise healthy eating and positive behaviour.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years