



St. Matthew's National School
Cranfield Place, Sandymount, Dublin 4

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HEALTHY EATING POLICY

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

Please read this policy alongside the school's Anaphylaxis Policy and other relevant plans, procedures and policies.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Aims:

- To ensure children eat a healthy and well-balanced lunch for pupils.
- 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.

Objectives

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

HEALTHY LUNCH OPTIONS

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).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children:

Bread & alternatives:

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal
Rice – wholegrain
Pasta – wholegrain
Wholemeal Scones
Bread sticks
Potato Salad
Crackers

Savouries:

Lean Meat
Chicken/Turkey
Cheese
Quiche
Pizza

Pitta Bread	
<u>Fruit & Vegetables:</u> Apples, Banana, Peach Mandarins, Orange segments Fruit Salad, dried fruit Plum, Pineapple cubes, Grapes Cucumber, Sweetcorn Tomatoes	<u>Drinks:</u> Water Milk Fruit juices Low Sugar Squashes Yoghurt

A word about Milk:

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

We ask that children do not bring the following to school:

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Role of Parents

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children
- Encourage healthy eating
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To implement school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or candy to school

Role of Children

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or candy to school

Role of School

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- Please note that Dublin City Council provides Healthy Lunches.

IMPLEMENTATION

As part of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum reasons for healthy eating will be discussed with the children regularly by staff. The Healthy Food Pyramid will be explored with children during these lessons. We endeavour to hold a healthy eating week every year.

Teachers will continue to give children a sweet treat on occasions in recognition of work done, improvements in work or behaviour and in an effort to promote positive behaviour. Sweet treats used prudently by teachers will not interfere with the health and motivation of the children. As a privilege, 5th & 6th Class may bring crisps to school on a Friday as a part of a balanced diet.

Signed: _____ *Chairperson of Board of Management*

Date: _____

Signed: _____ *Principal*

Date: _____

Date of next review: January 2019