

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

This policy has been developed to further the promotion of health in Sandymount School and Clinic, Enable Ireland. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Science Programmes in our school, we encourage the pupils to become more aware of the need for healthy food at break and dinner times.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance. A healthy diet promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth and can reduce some health risks in later life.

We ask you as parents to encourage a healthy break time snack from the start. We wish to promote a positive, healthy attitude towards food and ask that food not become associated with rewards or 'treats'. Some of our pupils do not take food orally but we would hope that all would experience 'Lunchtime' as a positive experience.

In school, teachers will examine their Cookery Lessons with a view to reducing the amount of sweet dishes cooked. School staff will receive regular training and advice from the in-house dietician regarding portion sizes etc.

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we re-introduced a healthy eating policy starting from September 2016.

Aims

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
2. To promote a positive relationship with food.
3. To promote the health of the child.
4. To raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food.
5. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

The children eat twice in our school, a break time (15 mins) and a lunch time (40 mins). As a hot dinner is provided daily for the children at lunch time, your child need only bring a **small** packed break to school.

Healthy hot dinners are provided to the pupils daily. Every pupil should have a Feeding, eating, drinking and swallowing (FEDS) profile provided by the CDNT. The FEDS profile dictates the level of consistency for each dinner.

N.B. Many of our pupils have very specialised dietary needs. We ask parents/guardians of any child who requires a special diet to keep in close contact with the class teacher and SNAs and keep the school, and nursing informed of any changes.

The following are some suggestions for a healthy snack (a healthy snack might include one or two of the following):

- A small sandwich or roll
- Rice/corn cakes



- Small tub of pasta
- Small scone
- Crackers
- Pitta bread
- Yoghurt
- Cheese slices/strips etc.
- Fruit
- Vegetables – preferably washed and chopped

You might also like to include a drink – preferably water or milk.

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/vegetable in their lunchboxes. Rewards might include stickers, verbal praise, tokens, certificates, cards etc.

Please do **NOT** send the following to school:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy Drinks
- Drinks in glass bottles
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/ bars
- Chocolate spreads
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Popcorn
- Lollipops
- Cakes, buns, muffins
- Products containing nuts, kiwis

These items will be returned to the child's lunch box to bring home. A small card will be included in the lunch box explaining that the lunch is unsuitable.

If children forget their snack they will be provided with a yoghurt or suitable alternative.

A number of children in our school have a known **allergy** to particular foods. A list of these known allergies will be included at the end of this policy. If your child has an allergy please inform the school if you have not already done so.

Please note that the School Healthy Eating Policy will be in place from Monday to Friday. (No 'Treat Days' except birthdays).

Birthdays

We recognise that a birthday is a very special occasion for the children in our school. Therefore the child can bring in some party foods on this day. Please consult with the class teacher beforehand in case of allergies etc. in the class.



Food Dudes

Schools are encouraged to engage with the Food Dudes programme to support healthy eating and we have participated in this programme. The programme in Ireland is organised by Bord Bia and is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

It encourages children to eat more fruit and vegetables at schools and at home. Healthy eating remains an important issue as 1 in 4 children in Ireland are overweight or obese. In the first national rollout, 98% of primary schools completed the programme. Freshly prepared fruit and vegetables, rewards and Food Dudes lunchboxes are provided free of charge to participating schools, and a designated project manager will assist in implementation.

Travelling by Bus

Due to Health and Safety reasons we ask parents **NOT** to give their child any food to eat on the bus.

Review and Ratification

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:



Sé Goulding, Chairperson of Board of Management



Jennifer Doyle, Principal

Date: 23 May 2023

