

# Star of the Sea Primary School WHOLE SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

The school is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enabling pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat. This will be achieved by the whole school approach to food and nutrition documented in this whole school food policy.

Extensive consultation was sought from our parent cohort through the use of suggestion boxes and surveys undertaken by the school's Health Promoting Committee (comprising of staff, pupils and parents).

In reviewing this policy the school was fortunate to be able to avail of the expertise of two qualified nutritionists from our parent group.

## FOOD POLICY CO-ORDINATOR

*This whole school food policy and healthy eating strategy is co-ordinated by a committee of staff members.*

## FOOD POLICY AIMS

The main aims of our school food policy are:

**To enable pupils to make healthy food choices through the provision of information and development of appropriate skills and attitudes**

**To provide healthy food choices throughout the school day**

These aims will be addressed through the following areas:

### 1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In healthy eating, as in all other areas of the curriculum we recognise the value of the individual and strive to provide equal access of opportunity for all.

### 2. CURRICULUM

Food and nutrition is taught at an appropriate level in each class through the science and SPHE curriculum. It is taught at a whole school level through school assemblies, guest speakers, healthy eating weeks and various initiatives.

This is addressed through:

#### Teaching methods

Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Teaching methods adopted in the classroom offer a rich variety of opportunities for participatory learning and include debating issues, group discussions and role-play.

## **Leading by example and staff training**

Teachers have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food, so it is important that they are familiar with healthy eating guidelines. To facilitate this some teachers attend, where provided, training courses and all relevant information is discussed at staff meetings. The school is also involved with the Health Promoting Schools initiative.

## **Visitors in the classroom**

This school values the contribution made by the school nurse in supporting class teachers and appreciates the valuable contribution of outside agencies. We believe it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the contributions made by visitors to the classroom reflect our own philosophy and approach to the subject. The status of visitors to the school is always checked ensuring that the content of the visitor's talk is suitable for the ages of the pupils.

## **Resources**

Resources for the teaching of healthy eating in SPHE have been selected to complement the delivery of the curriculum in other subject areas.

## **Curriculum assessment and monitoring**

Children's learning about healthy eating is assessed in line with the school's assessment policy through science and SPHE.

Other aspects of healthy eating work are evaluated through activities, which have been built into the programme, as part of the planning process.

## **3. FOOD AND DRINK PROVISION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DAY**

### **Packed Lunches-**

#### **Aim**

**To ensure that all packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) provide the pupil with healthy and nutritious food.**

#### **Packed lunches should include:**

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day.
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus or falafel) every day
- A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals every day aiming for wholegrain varieties.
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt (yoghurts are not permitted in the infant classrooms), fromage frais, soya products everyday.
- Water – we aim to become a water only school and therefore we encourage parents and guardians to provide water only for their children.

**The following foods are not allowed:**

- Fizzy or sugary drinks, crisps, popcorn, chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, 'treat' yoghurts, cereal bars, sweets and chewing gum.
- Due to allergies, nuts and nut butters are banned in all classes.

**Friday Treat:**

On a Friday children are allowed a small treat as part of their lunch e.g. fun size bar, two biscuits, home-made bun, small slice of cake.

The following table from [www.healthyfoodforall.com](http://www.healthyfoodforall.com) uses the food pyramid to help with creating a healthy and balanced lunchbox.

<b>Bread, cereals and potatoes</b> Bread (all types, plain or toasted), rolls, pitta breads, crackers (preferably wholegrain/whole wheat), pasta, spaghetti, rice	<b>2 servings for lunch</b> 1 serving is: 1 slice of bread 1 medium roll 2 crackers 2 tablespoons of cooked pasta/ rice
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b> Vegetables – cooked or raw, salad vegetables, vegetable sticks, all fresh fruit, dried fruit, unsweetened pure fruit juice	<b>1 or more servings for lunch</b> 1 serving is: 1 large piece of fruit e.g. 1 apple/1 orange/1 banana 2 small pieces of fruit e.g. 2 satsumas/2 kiwis 100ml unsweetened pure fruit juice ½ tin of fruit, in own juice 2 tablespoons of vegetables 1 small salad
<b>Milk, cheese and yoghurt</b> Milk and cheese is recommended	<b>1 serving for lunch</b> 1 serving is: 1 glass of milk 1 yoghurt 1oz cheddar cheese 2 slices processed cheese
<b>Meat, fish and alternatives</b> Meat (lean beef/lamb/pork/ham), chicken/turkey, eggs, fish, nuts (whole nuts are not suitable for children under 5 years), peanut butter, cheese, textured vegetable protein/tofu/beans	<b>1 serving for lunch</b> 1 serving is: 2 slices of cooked meat (2oz) 2 slices chicken/turkey breast (2oz) 3oz fish e.g. tuna/salmon/ mackerel/sardines 2 eggs – hard boiled/sliced/ mashed 2oz cheddar cheese

## **USE OF FOOD AS A REWARD**

The school does not encourage the regular eating of sweets or other foods high in sugar or fat, therefore sweets and other treats are not given as a reward for good behaviour or academic or other achievements. Other methods of positive reinforcement are used in school. Children can choose a reward from a selection of options such as; extra art and music, lunch and reading outdoors, dancing, sitting next to a friend, stickers, homework off vouchers, principal's reward, certificates etc.

## **DRINKING WATER**

Water is the most tooth-friendly drink and children are encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout the school day. We encourage all children to bring a water bottle with them to school which can be refilled throughout the day. Children are encouraged to take a water break at regular intervals throughout the day by their class teacher, spelling out the word WATER to mark each break.

## **4. FOOD AND DRINK BROUGHT INTO SCHOOL**

### **Events and Celebrations**

We want to give children the opportunity to celebrate their birthdays but in order to reduce the amount of high fat, sugar and salt foods children eat, we ask that parents and carers do not send in birthday cakes or foods. We celebrate birthdays in school with birthday songs, stickers, badges, a homework pass and a special mention in our weekly assembly in order to make children feel special on their birthdays.

Throughout the year, Star of the Sea pupils are involved in a number of fundraising opportunities such as cake sales and celebrations where sweets and cakes are part of the celebration. These celebrations and cake sales do not occur regularly and therefore tie in with our school's ethos of moderation. At Christmas children receive a small gift, of a selection box, from the Parent's Association. We will endeavour to vary this gift from time to time so that children are not always receiving sweets. During special celebrations, e.g. the Communion Party, we will also endeavour to provide a fruit option for children.

## **5. SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Special diets and allergies**

The school recognises that some pupils may require special diets. In this case parents and carers are urged to be responsible in ensuring that packed lunches are as healthy as possible. Parents and carers are advised that packed lunches must not contain the banned foods referred to in the section on packed lunches. For these reasons pupils are also not permitted to swap food items.

## **FOOD ALLERGY AND INTOLERANCE**

For children with allergies, factors such as the child's age and the severity of their allergy are taken into consideration when creating their management plan. Staff will liaise with parents and carers in order to ensure that the needs of children with allergies are met.

However, due to the risk of cross contamination, parents and carers are asked to refrain from sending children to school with products that contain nuts or products that contain nut butters. Due to allergies, children are not allowed to swap or share lunches.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY**

### **Implementation**

#### **Monitoring packed lunches**

Teachers will regularly monitor the content of packed lunches and involve pupils and staff. A child will not be allowed to eat foods which do not adhere to our school policy and they will be given a healthier alternative instead. We will talk to pupils, parents and carers where necessary and offer advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches. If children consistently bring packed lunches that do not adhere to these guidelines a letter will be sent home with a copy of this policy. The school has recently taken part in a packed lunch box survey to monitor the food consumed from packed lunches. Through the lunch box survey and consultation with the pupils, two key areas to address were highlighted; drinks and the Friday treat.

#### **Communication**

All families will receive a copy of our Whole School Food Policy. A copy is also available from the office and on our school website. Parents and carers are kept informed of any updates through letters, messages and through the Health Promoting School Committee's blog on the school website.

#### **Consultation**

Parents', carers' and pupils' ideas and suggestions are welcomed. During times when policies are being reviewed a suggestion box will be available near the office.

## **REVIEW**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2017

Review Date: January 2019

Signed  
Denis O' Byrne  
Chairperson