

# Healthy Eating Policy

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Ballinteer Community School

Ratified by the Board of Management on....

## Policy Statement

Young people need to be aware of the importance of good nutrition in order to optimise their growth, health and developmental potential through their teenage years and beyond. This Healthy Eating Policy operates in the context of the school's commitment to quality education and supporting each student to develop the skills to make informed choices and decisions throughout life.

This Healthy Eating Policy has been developed in consultation with the Parents' Association and the Student Council. The Policy has been ratified by the Staff and by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed and updated as required.

The Policy aims to support all members of the School Community in improving and maintaining optimal health. The Policy will be implemented jointly by parents/guardians and the whole school community.

## Rationale

Research has shown that the poor eating habits of many adolescents can lessen their concentration levels and have a negative impact on classroom behaviour. Ill-informed food choices are also associated with increasing levels of childhood obesity and lifelong health and dental problems. The school, in partnership with the home, can play an important role in developing healthy eating habits as part of its duty of care to its students.

## Aims of the Policy

### Short-term

- ✓ To support healthy food choices during the school day;
- ✓ To promote nutrition awareness in the whole school community;
- ✓ To raise levels of concentration and energy within class;
- ✓ To make more healthy food and drink options available in the school;
- ✓ To discourage the consumption of unhealthy food and drink in the school.

## Long-term

- ✓ To empower our students to maintain lifelong healthy eating habits;
- ✓ To develop a supportive whole-school environment where healthy-eating messages are consistent throughout the school and the curriculum.

## Action Plan

### A. Whole-School Context

- ✓ The school canteen operates in conjunction with the School Completion Programme and provides healthy menus as well as water.
- ✓ The School Completion programme facilitates the Breakfast Club which provides a healthy breakfast to students.
- ✓ Students should normally eat and drink only in the GPA. All users of the GPA should take responsibility for keeping the area clean, tidy and a pleasant place in which to eat.
- ✓ If there is a vending machine in the school it will stock only water and healthy food items from a list pre-approved by the Healthy Eating Committee.
- ✓ Food/drink not allowed in school includes fizzy and added-sugar drinks and chewing gum.
- ✓ Some items which are normally banned may be allowed on special occasions, as determined by the school Principal.
- ✓ Healthy Eating Promotions and Initiatives will take place regularly.
- ✓ The Healthy Eating Policy will be incorporated into the School Journal.
- ✓ Comprehensive nutrition information and guidelines on the provision of lunches and snacks will be posted on the school website.

## B. Teaching and Learning

- ✓ Aspects of diet, nutrition, physical activity and health are specifically addressed during Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Home Economics, Biology, Science and Physical Education (PE).
- ✓ All other subject areas can provide opportunities for promoting the Healthy Eating Policy. It is an ideal theme for cross-curricular project work.
- ✓ Specific learning outcomes will be set each year in order to coordinate support for the Healthy Eating Policy. As well as delivering information, these will develop the skills and confidence required in order to make healthy choices. The Working Group will work with the Staff and the Students' Council in deciding the learning targets.

## Rôles and Responsibilities

The Healthy Eating Policy will be implemented by the parents, staff and students of Ballinteer Community School. The Healthy Eating Policy Working Group will co-ordinate the progress of the Policy, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report back to staff, parents and pupils.

## Review

The Healthy Eating Policy should be reviewed as required, at least every two years.

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## HEALTHY EATING TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- Encourage healthy eating for the whole family;
- Do not buy foods you do not want your child to eat;
- Keep a stock of healthy snacks close to hand for your children;
- Practice what you preach - children will mimic parents' eating habits;
- Encourage regular meals - turn off the television during mealtimes;
- Health eating and exercise go hand in hand - Encourage every member of the family to exercise more.

## HEALTHY LUNCH BOXES

Remember when packing a lunchbox to choose something from each of the four main food groups to ensure that a wide range of nutrients are on offer. An ideal lunch would contain some bread or cereal food, some fruit or vegetables, some milk/yoghurt and a protein rich food from the meat group

Some ideas for a healthy lunch box or nutritious snack options:

### Sandwiches

*Choose from:* rolls, bread, baps, pitta breads, panini, baguette, croissants, crispbread, crackers, scones.

*Fill with:* thinly sliced beef, lamb or pork, cooked ham, chicken, turkey, tuna, grilled rashers, sliced sausages, pate, Spanish omelette, hard-boiled eggs, roasted peppers, grated cheese, cream cheese, tomatoes, lettuce....

*Mix with:* mayonnaise, chutney, curry paste.....

### Other Healthy Snacks

Potato, rice, pasta or couscous salad, soup, yoghurt, granola, trail mix, cheese, sticks of carrot or celery, popcorn, rice cakes, nuts, peanut butter

### Fruit

*Fresh Fruit-* apples, bananas, pears, mandarins, plums, kiwis or grapes

*Dried Fruit-* apricots, raisins, dates, etc.

### Drinks

Milk, unsweetened fruit juice, smoothie, yoghurt drink