



# *St. Peter's National School Drogheda*



## **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing long term health of school children and staff. The school day provides the opportunity for having at least one of the daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. It is the policy of S Peter's N.S., under the SPHE programme, to help all those involved in our school community, e.g. children, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

### **Relationship to the Characteristic Ethos of the School**

Providing a quality health education is part of our vision of our school as a place where each child is nurtured and achieves his/her potential. The curriculum provides an opportunity to explore and learn about food and healthy lifestyles.

### **Objectives**

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, 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 Eating Guidelines

1. Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school.
2. A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid. (Please see attached food pyramid)
3. Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage include fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (non dessert), plain rice cakes and crackers.
4. All pupils are encouraged to bring plain milk to school. Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage.
5. Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Water will also be made available throughout the day if children need to refill their bottle. A water drinking font is provided on the yard and water in the classrooms is fit for consumption following the 2015 renovation and upgrade of plumbing systems in the school.
6. Pure unsweetened juices or well diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash: 8 parts water) may be included but only as part of children's main lunch meal.

**7. Due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils, we ask you to be vigilant in the following:**

- Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
- Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts such as Nutella, nut based breads and cereal/health bars containing nuts or labelled “may contain nut traces” in school lunches.
- Ask children not to share their lunches.
- If your child has eaten peanuts/nuts before coming to school, please be sure your child’s hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering the school.

8. Chocolate spreads, chocolate/cheese dips and chewy /sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, crisps, cereal bars, biscuits, fizzy drinks and juice drinks are not permitted during the week. However, on a Friday, a small treat is allowed. It is important that the portion of this treat is appropriate e.g. a small bag of crisps or a small cereal bar.

9. In keeping with the Green Schools Initiative, which addresses reducing litter and hence protecting the school environment, foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum. Wrappers will be kept in the lunchboxes and brought home.

10. On special occasions, non-food related treats are to be encouraged. This includes PTA sponsored selection box at Christmas and an Easter Egg. After the Annual Sponsored Walk water and popcorn are given.

11. When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer e.g. 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class Bake Sale can include healthy options.
12. Sweet treats for birthdays such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc should not be brought into school as there may be so many birthdays that sweet treats are available nearly every day.
13. Nutrition & healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.

### **Implementation**

14. Teachers and staff and parents will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including providing non-food related rewards.
15. Teachers and staff can from time to time reward children with stamps, as per our Discipline for Learning Policy, for making healthy choices and children may also be asked to return items to their lunchboxes to be taken home.
16. 'Healthy Eating Awareness Days' will be held throughout the year as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
17. The '*Healthy Eating Guidelines*' will be reviewed every two years and the policy will be visibly displayed in the school.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was revised in accordance with HSE Guidelines following staff training and ratified by the Board of Management on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2017

Signature of Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017