



St. Patrick's School, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Scoil Phadraig, Droim Conrach, Ath Cliath 9

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St. Patrick's BNS – Healthy Eating Policy

“Children who develop healthy eating habits in childhood are more likely to maintain these habits in later life.”

Introduction

This policy was formulated following consultation with staff, pupils and parents. We believe this policy will enable the children to develop and maintain healthy eating habits. It is linked to SPHE (Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition and Making Choices) and Science (Myself: Human Life Processes). This policy will be far easier to implement if school and home are of the one mind and all the children follow the same guidelines.

Our policy aims to:

- enable the children to develop and maintain healthy eating habits from an early age and begin to take responsibility for their food choices
- support parents/guardians in providing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle for their children
- educate the pupils about nutrition and improve the children's concentration and attention

Points to consider

- Various studies and surveys over the past few years have indicated growing levels of obesity among Irish children. Children are generally far less active than children years ago and many have developed poor eating habits over the years.
- The single most important dietary factor in relation to tooth decay is the number of times a child takes sugary foods and drinks.
- Illnesses which up to now would have been considered adult conditions are now becoming more and more common among children.

Guidelines

A healthy lunch is encouraged **everyday**. The 'Food Pyramid' is an excellent guide on how to eat healthily. The healthier options are shown on the bottom and the top level shows foods which should be eaten sparingly.

Suggestions for Healthy Lunches

- ✓ Fruit (fresh and dried). Fruit is provided free of charge from Dublin City Council on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- ✓ Cheese (including Cheese Strings)
- ✓ Yoghurt
- ✓ Bread (wholemeal is best), rice cakes (without chocolate coating), wraps, baps, crackers, flapjacks, scones, pitta bread and crispbread
- ✓ Sandwich fillings of meat, cheese, salad, fish and egg
- ✓ Salad boxes (pasta, rice, etc.)
- ✓ Water, milk (provided daily free of charge from Dublin City Council), certain fruit juices (please check labels as some are very unhealthy; avoid those that have added sugar and choose those that are 100% fruit juice or pure fruit juice)

We understand that children will often ask for treats. In order to support parents/guardians the following items are not allowed and should not be brought to school:

- chewing gum
- cans, fizzy drinks and glass bottles
- crisps and popcorn
- bars
- sweets
- muffins, buns, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, etc.

Exceptions

Rules may be relaxed for special occasions (e.g. class parties, in exchange for 'merit certs', etc). Children are allowed to bring in a small treat on Fridays. For example: a small chocolate bar, biscuit or muffin.

Please remember that all lunch leftovers and packaging are to be put back in the child's lunchbox and brought home. All milk cartons are also to be brought home. This is in line with our Green School Project.

Websites

There are some great websites for both parents and children with plenty of useful information and suggestions on healthy eating:

www.fooddudes.ie

www.healthpromotion.ie

Timeframe for Review

It will be reviewed at the end of the 2012/2013 school year.