

Holy Family N.S. Tubbercurry

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

Our School is a Health-Promoting School. We strive to promote healthy lifestyles for all in our school community. Our efforts in this area have been rewarded with a 'Health-Promoting' flag. We are working to achieve healthy-eating, increase physical activity and promote positive mental health in our school. This project is led by Ms Cooney and a Health Promoting Committee. The policy is reflective of the work of staff, children and parents.

Rationale

We decided to work on this area as we felt that life can be very busy and guidelines about healthy lunches will be helpful. Through our Health Promoting Committee we hope to encourage healthy lifestyles. The DES also encourages healthy lifestyles in our schools.

As part of the 'Social, Personal and Health Education' (S.P.H.E.) programme, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the 'Physical Education' programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The 'Science' curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops.

Aims of this policy:

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the children, staff and parents in our school.
- To promote the health of the children, staff and parents and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the children, staff and parents to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.
- To increase physical activity of all in our school community.
- To promote positive mental health to all in our school community by engaging in techniques and strategies to encourage mindfulness and positive-thinking.

Content of the plan

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a bottle of water.

Lunches in our school are provided by 'Fresh Today'. Please be mindful when ordering lunches and choose the healthy options where possible such as wholemeal bread instead of white bread, fruit instead of biscuits, etc. Lunch companies are monitored by the Department of Health and have guidelines about the types of healthy lunches that can be provided.

The Healthy Lunch Guidelines:

Children and teachers in each class were asked to discuss what they thought should be in a healthy lunch. From these discussions the following guidelines emerged.

What is a healthy lunch?

- It is full of goodness like protein, vitamins and minerals, especially calcium for healthy and teeth.
- Contains food with no sugar, because too much sugar is bad for your teeth.
- Contains no artificial colourings, flavourings or additives.
- Gives us strength and energy.
- Makes us fit and healthy.
- Helps our brain power.

What could be in a healthy lunch?

- Brown bread or wraps.
- Pitta bread, crackers.
- Fruit (peeled and chopped for small children).
- Raisins.
- Vegetables (washed and chopped).
- Pasta.
- Salad.
- Meat/eggs.
- Yoghurt (easy to open)/cheese.

What should not be in a healthy lunch?

- Crisps, salted nuts or popcorn.
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies.
 - Chewing gum.
- Cake, biscuits, pastries or doughnuts.
 - Chocolate spread.
 - Fizzy drinks.
 - Flavoured milk.

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?

- Water.
- Fruit juices.
- Diluted drinks.
- Milk.
- Actimel.
- Smoothies.

What drinks should not be allowed?

- Fizzy drinks.
- Sugary drinks.
- Hot drinks (in case we spill them).

If children bring in foods that are not allowed in school, the teacher will send these foods home at the end of the day.

Do we make exceptions for special occasions?

- Yes, for treats after Communion or Confirmation.
- Yes, for end-of-term parties.
- No, for school trips (in case we get sick on the bus).
- No, we cannot have children's birthday parties in school.

The children of Holy Family N.S. are very keen to have healthy lunches and show a good understanding of what that means. They are also keen to increase their levels of physical activity. Our school will strive to promote positive mental health by using mindfulness and positive rewards/thinking in all classes. We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices for healthy bodies for all in our school community.

Our Health-Promoting School motto is:

Healthy Body + Healthy Mind = Healthy Life