

# Healthy Eating Policy



Reviewed September 2023

*In this policy, the term "parent" refers to the adult or adults with parental responsibility.*

A good diet is important for good health. A healthy and varied diet can help maintain a healthy body weight, enhance general well-being and reduce the number of diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis.

In Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit it is our policy that we promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and therefore healthy eating at break time and lunch time.

Our School Meals' Kitchen (SMK) promotes healthy eating as the meals provided at lunch time take into account the nutritional guidelines put in place by the Department of Education and the Education Authority.

## **Aims**

Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit recognises the important part a healthy diet plays for a child's wellbeing and their ability to learn effectively and achieve. We believe the school, in partnership with parents, can make a major contribution to improving children's health by increasing their knowledge and understanding of food and helping them to make healthy food choices. We aim to develop these ideas and understanding at an early age so that their decisions will be well informed and balanced.

## **The school aims to:**

- Improve the health of children, staff and their families by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge;
- Increase awareness of food issues, including what constitutes a healthy and environmentally sustainable diet;
- Make healthy eating enjoyable and the norm;
- Monitor healthy choices, including snacks and packed lunches;
- Present consistent, informed messages about healthy eating within school through all school practices and integrate healthy eating and drinking habits in all aspects of school life;
- Provide opportunities for all children to make informed decisions about what is a balanced and healthy diet and to encourage the desire to make a healthy choice;
- Develop healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime;
- Ensure high standards of hygiene amongst the children.

## **Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all staff including teaching staff, assistants and catering staff to implement the 'Healthy Eating' policy and to actively act as role models to demonstrate positive attitudes towards healthy eating and how to make healthy food choices.

- Senior members of staff lead on the development and monitoring of Healthy Eating education and its implementation and liaise with the lunchtime meals supervisor, kitchen staff and food contractor.

- The Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator is responsible for how healthy eating is being developed within the curriculum
- Caterers and kitchen staff are responsible for providing high quality food that complies with the nutritional guidelines put in place by the Department of Education and the Education Authority and for contributing to a welcoming and positive eating environment.
- Parents receive the catering menu for the month and share with the children in advance.

At Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit, healthy eating is delivered within a whole school approach which may include:

- Topics;
- Planned aspects of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the World Around Us and other curriculum areas;
- Special assemblies/visits by agencies;
- Pastoral time (e.g. Circle Time);
- Extra-curricular activities; and
- Special projects.

## **Pupils**

As part of our 'Healthy Eating' policy, pupils are encouraged to:

- bring a healthy break to school each day;
- eat fruit, vegetables, dairy products or bread-based products at break time and lunch time;
- drink non sugar-based drinks;
- bring water to class to drink throughout the day. The children should use a bottle with a pop-up lid in order to avoid spillages.

## **Staff**

As part of our 'Healthy Eating' policy, all staff are encouraged to:

- eat fruit, vegetables, dairy products or bread based products at break time and lunch time;
- drink non sugar based drinks, water, tea or coffee at break time and lunch;

## **Breakfast**

Recognising parental responsibility and school/parent partnership, children are encouraged to have breakfast before leaving home. This will be done through discussion at snack time and through topic based planned lessons throughout the year.

Should a child present as hungry in the morning, classroom assistants will offer cereal to the child and stay and chat to the child in the resource area while he/she is eating.

The school offers a **free family breakfast club** on a Friday morning from 8.00am-8.45am, in the CFC café on the Belmont Road. All family members are welcome to attend.

The Sleepy Hollow wrap around care facility within the school also offers a Breakfast Club for the children from 8.00am.

### **Snack**

Children should bring one item for snack to school each day which should reflect our Healthy Eating Policy. Crisps, nuts, biscuits, sweets and runny foods such as yoghurts should not be brought for snack.

Children should bring a bottle of water to school each day.

Milk will also be available to purchase for P1-3.

Nursery children receive free milk.

Each class teacher will monitor snacks daily. In cases of repeated concerns such as regularly not bringing a snack to school, these are communicated and logged through the schools' safeguarding procedures.

### **School Meals**

Meals are booked through the Schoolmoney online system.

- meals that follow the guidelines provided in the publications, *'School Food, Top Marks Nutritional Standards for School Lunches'*, *'Nutritional Standards for other Food and Drinks in Schools'* and *'School Food, the Essential Guide'*;
- milk or water for the children to drink;
- fresh fruit with every meal;
- meals that are low in salt content;

*Salt is not available to be used by the children on their meals.*

### **Packed Lunches**

- Parents and carers are encouraged to provide well balanced healthy packed lunches for their children. Fizzy drinks should not be included in the children's packed lunches.
- The child should be able to manage this by her/himself thus promoting independence and self-confidence.
- The packed lunch should reflect our Healthy Eating Policy.

To promote healthy packed lunches, we will talk to parents and send out information, advice and guidance on bringing healthy packed lunches.

### **Dietary Needs**

All dietary requirement requests must be made at the beginning of each year, and the correct paperwork completed before the School Meals Kitchen staff are able to offer alternative food options.

As part of our 'Healthy Eating' policy the school's catering staff provide: Meal provision by the SMK also reflects religious, ethnic and vegetarian needs of pupils and staff.

In consultation with parents, a child's dietary requirements devised by a dietician will be adhered to. If any issues arise, teachers will consult parents or relevant health professionals for advice.

### **Dissemination of the Policy**

All staff members and school governors receive a copy of this policy. The policy is also distributed to all pupils enrolled at the school and their parents.

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICE: NUT FREE SCHOOL**

It is school policy that pupils and staff do **not bring nuts or nut based products to school**. Dundela Infants' School and Nursery Unit is a '**nut free zone**'. We have children enrolled at our school that may suffer an anaphylactic shock if they come into contact with nut products or nut-based products.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be monitored and reviewed in line with the school's policy review schedule.