

## **Scoil Mhuire, Davidstown**

### **Healthy Eating Policy**

#### **Introductory Statement**

Good nutrition is essential for school children. Physical activity is integral to any healthy eating programme and should be promoted and encouraged. In consultation with the parents and the staff of Scoil Mhuire, a Healthy Eating policy has been adopted.

#### **Rationale**

- Healthy eating is an essential component of the health of pupils and as such is part of the holistic education policy that advocated by Scoil Mhuire. The adoption of the whole school approach ensures that healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of life in the school.
- Healthy eating is an integral part of SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) food and nutrition curriculum programme for each class. Research indicates that the provision of nutritious lunches enhances not only the pupil's health but also allows the pupil to take full advantage of the education provided by improved attention levels and concentration spans.
- Key healthy eating messages that are consistent and fact-based assist pupils in decision making and forming attitudes around healthy eating.

#### **Aims**

- To assist all involved in the school, pupils, parents and staff to develop a positive and responsible attitude to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.
- To heighten an awareness of the importance of eating a balanced diet.
- To raise levels of concentration among the pupils due to the consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food/pre-prepared meals etc.

#### **Guidelines**

##### **Breakfast**

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and all children should have a healthy breakfast before coming to school. Having a healthy breakfast every day has shown to improve concentration and overall behaviour as well as increased energy levels and helping to maintain a healthy weight in the long term.

Breakfast should be based on starchy foods such as breakfast cereals and bread. Cereals like porridge and Weetabix are the best. High sugar cereals like Frosties, Coco-Pops and Crunchy Nut Cornflakes should be avoided. Try to fit in some fruit with your child's breakfast – slices of banana or apple can be very good with a cereal.

### **Healthy Lunch Box**

#### **Food**

The following foods are recommended for a balanced lunch:

- **Starchy food** – Bread roll, pitta bread, crackers, pasta, rice or a plain scone
- **Protein food** – a nutritious filling for the above such as egg, meat, fish etc.
- **Dairy item** – cheese, milk or yoghurt
- **One or more pieces of fruit, vegetables or salad**

The following foods are not permitted:

- Crisps or popcorn
- Chewing gum
- Nuts or nut products
- Winders or Frubes
- Sweets. Bars, cereal bars, chocolate, biscuits
- Lunchables

#### **Drink**

The following drinks are recommended:

- Water, milk, 100% or unsweetened juice (check sugar content) or a sugar free diluted fruit juice
- Children may drink water at regular intervals during the day. Pupils bring their own bottle of water to school

The following drinks are not permitted:

- Fizzy drinks
- Energy drinks
- Drinks in cans

### **Healthy School Environment**

- Every effort will be made to encourage parents to support the healthy eating policy.
- With balance and moderation being important; a small treat on Friday is permitted. A small treat would be for e.g. a fun size bar, two biscuits. Portion control is key to a balanced diet.
- The teachers and the school promote our healthy eating policy using posters, leaflets, the food pyramid chart, guest speakers and agencies.
- National campaigns may be used as an opportunity to focus on healthy eating.
- We will organise a healthy eating week in the first term to highlight this policy.
- Pupils eat their lunch while being supervised in the classrooms. No food is permitted in the school playground at any time. Pupils use their lunch box lid as a plate and bring home their own rubbish.
- Pupils are encouraged to drink water/fluids during the school day.

### **Success Criteria**

Pupils will have a heightened awareness of healthy eating.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Parents play an essential role in helping shape children's eating habits and attitudes towards physical activity. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with a healthy lunch.

The teachers will monitor the progress of this policy in their own classroom. The teacher will send home any food not permitted as per the guidelines, along with any uneaten food.

### **Implementation and review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner in light of any significant changes.

### **Ratification and Communication**

Copies of this policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of staff and parents.

**Signed:**

**Date:**