



## St Mary's Junior School

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# St Mary's Junior School

## Healthy Eating Policy

### Rationale:

*St Mary's Junior National School aims to promote a healthy eating policy. Research suggests that consuming appropriate food types and the frequency of their intake can contribute to a child's attention and concentration levels, thus maximizing the learning process.*

### Aims:

The aims of this policy are to:

- *Promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum*
- *Support and encourage long-term healthy eating habits in children*
- *Take a whole school approach to healthy eating in school*
- *Ensure that food provision in school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g – religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs*

- *Make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience for all*

*A healthy diet is one that allows for a balance of different foods that sustain the wellbeing of an individual. Lunch is an important meal, and it should provide one third of a child's recommended daily allowance of nutrients. In St. Mary's Junior National School, we are implementing a healthy snack and lunch policy to encourage children to have a suitably balanced diet.*

*It is also important to highlight the importance of children eating a healthy breakfast before coming to school. Breakfast gives the children the fuel and nutrients needed after a long night of sleep. A healthy breakfast also helps children's attention, concentration, and memory.*

### **Snack, Lunch, Water**

*The children eat twice during the school day. A small snack at 10:20 and lunch at 12:15. Parents have the option to provide their children with a healthy snack and lunch (from the guidelines below) or to avail of the lunches that Glanmore provide. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day, which is provided for in the Glanmore lunch or can be brought in from home. For most children, keeping hydrated is healthy and aids good concentration.*

### **HEALTHY SNACK OPTIONS – Fruit and Vegetables**

- Apple – small orange – banana – kiwi – pear – plum
- Grapes – strawberries – raisins
- Tomatoes – pieces of carrot – pieces of cucumber

### **Sandwiches**

- Brown or white bread
- Pitta bread
- Rolls

*(Fill these with your child's favourite healthy filling such as; ham, cheese, tuna, tomato, chicken, meat roll, lettuce, cheese spread, egg)*

## **Other Options**

- Cheese portions
- Pasta Salad
- An individual yoghurt pot or fromage frais (no muller corner yoghurts)
- Plain rice cakes
- Crackers
- Lunchables, cheese and breadsticks
- Small portion of unsalted popcorn

## **Drinks**

- Water
- Water with a drop of cordial
- Milk
- Apple juice and Orange juice

## **What should not be in a healthy lunch?**

- Crisps, salted nuts or any type of nut
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops, or jellies
- Chewing gum
- Cake, biscuits, pastries, or doughnuts
- Chocolates spread or peanut butter
- Fizzy drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk, fruit juice (fruit shoots), flavoured water (for example: Volvic Strawberry flavour)

## **What happens when children bring in foods not allowed?**

*The children can bring the food/drink home in their lunch box.*

## Modifications, Exemptions and Allergies

Due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils and staff, 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.*

Students may receive treats for positive behaviour or special achievements, if this is likely to be a frequent occurrence, parents will be consulted.

In exceptional circumstances and with parental consultation an exemption can be made to the above guidelines (e.g – dietary requirements, sensory issues, special dietary needs.)

In St. Mary’s JNS we have lots of celebrations, therefore some exemptions from the Healthy Eating Guidelines will be allowed for. Such as:

- *First Holy Communion*
- *Easter*
- *Christmas*
- *Halloween*
- *Pancake Tuesday*
- *School Tours*

For these occasions, the treats will be provided by the teachers to avoid risk of allergies.

As birthday celebrations are an important aspect of a child’s life, class teachers will celebrate birthdays in an alternative way to a party. As a result **no** party bags, treats or cakes are to be sent in with a child.

## **Implementation**

- Each child should bring in a suitable quantity of food for snack time if not availing of the lunches from Glanmore. The length of time for eating a small snack is generally about 10 minutes. A typical snack would include a yoghurt and a piece of fruit.
- As we are trying to reduce the amount of waste in the school, children will bring home any snack they do not finish, as well as the packaging. This allows parents to be aware of what their child has consumed during the day.
- Any child who brings in unsuitable food or drink into school will be asked to bring it home.
- When a parent knows that a child will not eat their lunch or snack that is provided by Glanmore, we kindly ask for them to speak with the School Secretary to discuss choosing different options for their child or send in a suitable alternative lunch for their child.

## **Education**

All classes will participate in a healthy eating programme called 'Food Dudes' which was developed to encourage children to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. In line with the curriculum, the children will have the opportunity to learn about the importance of healthy lifestyles through SPHE, SESE and PE. An aspect of SPHE, for example, focuses on "promoting health by exploring the need for regular exercise, food and nutrition and the significance of healthy eating habits" (Primary School Curriculum, 1999). As part of SESE and mathematics, there are sometimes baking activities which provide an opportunity for tasting and preparing new foods, encouraging children to broaden the range of healthy foods they eat.

**Development and Communication of this Policy and Plan**

All staff members were consulted, and their views canvassed in the preparation of the draft plan.

Parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Healthy Eating Policy to be ratified by Board of Management and reviewed every 3 years and up-dated as required.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in September 2017  
Reviewed April 2023

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal