



Castleplunkett NS

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we at Castleplunkett N.S encourage our children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance. For example; a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we will:

- Inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it

Castleplunkett N.S seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. Developing a healthy attitude to food and helping children to develop good habits is seen as an important part of school life.

Aims of Healthy Eating Policy:

- To encourage a positive attitude to food
- To promote a healthy diet
- To educate about different foods
- To promote good eating habits
- To encourage children to have a healthy diet
- To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school
- To have a healthy school community
- To enable each child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
- To enable each child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

SPHE Curriculum and Healthy Eating Initiatives

Formal lessons, which address nutrition, digestion, good health habits, hygiene etc. The Healthy Lunch initiative is an ongoing, habit forming process, whereby the children accept that certain foods are more suitable than others at lunch time. Young children enjoy showing and discussing their lunch box contents and provide encouragement for each other to make it a successful project.

The Food Dudes and Healthy Heroes initiatives are also explored to help reinforce healthy eating habits.

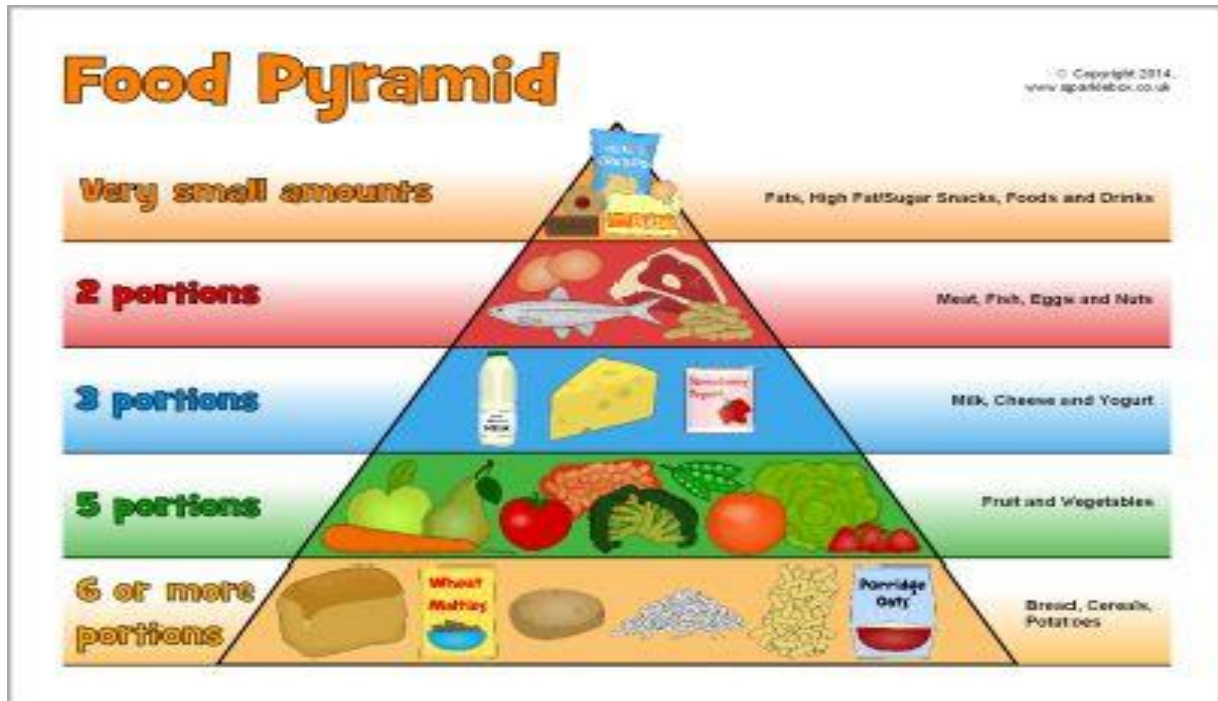
Guidelines/Recommendations

- There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.
- The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level and is taught each year. These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as Science.
- A copy of the healthy food pyramid is on display in every classroom. Healthy eating week is held annually.
- As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green school's status lunches should be packed in recyclable boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. All litter and uneaten food are to be taken home.

The following guide is designed to help parents provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for our children:

Bread & Alternatives	Savouries
Bread or rolls (preferably whole-meal, whole-grain or whole- wheat varieties) Wraps, Pitta bread Bread sticks Rice – wholegrain Pasta – wholegrain Wholemeal Scones/ Crackers.	Lean Meat (e.g. chicken/turkey, ham) Eggs Tinned Fish (e.g. tuna/sardines/salmon) Potato Salad Hummus
Fruit & Vegetables Apples, banana, peach mandarins, plums, orange segments, fruit Salad, dried fruit, pineapple cubes, grapes. Cucumber, sweetcorn, tomato, pepper slices, carrot batons.	Drinks Water or milk are the ideal choice. Fruit juices - <i>without added sugar. (Pure fruit juice also contains natural sugar and should be diluted with water)</i> Dairy Milk Natural Yoghurt Fruit Yoghurt Cheese (triangles/slices/ small blocks of cheddar/gouda/edam etc)

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:



A word about Dairy

Primary school children aged up to 8 years should choose any three servings each day from the dairy shelf of the food pyramid. Children aged 9-18 years need five servings a day.

Depending on the age of the child, 1 serving is for example:

- 1 large glass (200ml) low -fat or low-fat fortified milk
- 1 small carton yogurt (125ml)
- 1 small carton fromage frais 25g/1oz (matchbox size piece) of low-fat cheddar
- 1 portion of milk pudding made with a large glass low fat milk

This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If your child does not drink milk at lunch, encourage him/ her to have a carton of healthy yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead. Milk is a rich source of protein, calcium, vitamins and minerals.

Drinking Plenty of Water

Water is essential for life. Through perspiration (sweating), the body uses water to lower body temperature when it is warm. Regular drinks are necessary to replace fluid lost during the day. Without enough water or fluid in the short-term, the dehydration that results causes tiredness. Water is a tooth friendly drink. The more active a person is, the more fluid is

needed to replace fluid lost as sweat. In hot weather, or if playing sports, children should bring extra water to school.

Foods/ products not allowed in school

- Crisps, chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not allowed
- Peanuts, nutella, chocolate spread or any foods containing nuts or traces of nuts are not allowed under any circumstances. There could be pupils in school who have a nut allergy
- Lollipops
- Chocolate products, cereal bars & sweets
- Fruit juices

If children bring any of the above prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home.

Foods not recommended in school

- Biscuits
- Cakes, buns and pastries
- Fruit winders
- Hot drinks – particularly younger pupils who may suffer spills and burns
- Other foods high in sugar, salt or fat.

Special Dietary/ Medical Requirements

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be relayed to all staff.

Packing the Lunch Box

Children's portion sizes have gotten bigger over the last 20-30 years. Children should be able to eat their lunches in a reasonable amount of time. Children should be able to unwrap and eat their lunches by themselves. It is not possible for teachers to open lunches in a classroom full of children. Please help by not giving products that they cannot open themselves e.g. foods with wrappers, unpeeled oranges etc. To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g. fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut).

Parents must ensure that lunch boxes contain whatever utensils are required.

Roles and Responsibility

Each class teacher will co-ordinate the progress of this policy and can encourage the children to bring healthy lunches but ultimately the responsibility for ensuring that children eat healthily lies with the Parent /Guardian of each child.

Role of School Staff

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum.

Role of Parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children.
- Encourage healthy eating.
- Inform the school of any child’s special dietary needs.
- To implement school policy.

Role of Children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets to school.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented from _____.

Review:

A policy review will take place when deemed necessary or should changes arise within the school.

Communication and Ratification

A copy of the reviewed policy will be included in the enrolment pack for new pupils. The policy will be published on the school website

Signed: _____
(Chairperson)

(Date)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

(Date)