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St. Kevin's Girls' National School Healthy Eating Policy

Reviewed in September 2018 and trialled during school year 2018/19. Completed following consultation with staff and presented to the Board of Management for approval and ratification in October 2019.

Board of Management Meeting 24th October 2019.

Healthy Eating Policy

1. Introduction

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (P.E.) Programmes, we at Kilnamanagh Girls' National School encourage our children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and the wider school community) 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 parents are the primary role models in children's healthy eating education. 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 continue to:

- inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it.

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we have had a Healthy Eating Policy in St. Kevin's for a long number of years. The school participated in Food Dudes, a programme encouraging children to try fruit and vegetables, in the past and again in 2019. This programme was very successful in encouraging a positive attitude in the children to fruit and vegetables. We have signed up for a three-year roll-out of the programme.

The policy was reviewed in autumn 2018. All stakeholders in the process i.e. parents, pupils, staff, were consulted and the revised policy was ratified by the B.O.M. in September 2019.

Rationale for our Healthy Eating Policy

St. Kevin's Girls' National School 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

- To encourage a positive attitude to food.
- To promote a healthy diet.
- To educate about different foods.
- To educate pupils to be aware of the presence of salt, sugar and additives in food.
- To highlight the environmental impact of some crops.
- To inform about economical ways of providing healthy lunches.
- To promote good eating habits.
- To encourage children to have a healthy diet.
- To promote good hygiene practices.
- To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school.
- To have a healthy school community.

Objectives

- To enable each child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition.
- To promote the importance of healthy eating to physical and mental well-being.
- To enable each child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced lifestyle.
- To educate pupils on the importance of good nutrition so they are empowered to make informed decisions.

Curriculum

There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of the role of good nutrition in developing a healthy lifestyle. Balanced diets and healthy food choices are 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 and P.E..

We build a healthy eating ethos into our school environment. Healthy lunches are promoted regularly at class level and at whole school assemblies. We have a healthy eating notice board. We encourage the pupils to share ideas on what can be included in healthy lunchboxes orally and in visual displays. A copy of the healthy food pyramid is on display in the school. We strive to develop awareness about good nutrition and use phrases such as “why stop at five a day?” or “brown is best when it comes to bread, rice or pasta”.

We hope to publish our own school cookbook featuring healthy eating ideas from all classes.

We encourage pupils to write recipes as part of our English procedural writing genre.

The ethical sourcing of food is often featured in our school debate motions.

We intend to use food grown in our school garden to provide the ingredients for a whole school shared eating experience such vegetable soup.

As part of our environmental awareness programme, we encourage children to pack lunches in recyclable boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags where possible. All litter and uneaten food is to be taken home.

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Home

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

Bread & Alternatives

Savoury sandwiches featuring whole grain or brown bread with salad, chicken or fish fillings.

Wraps using wholemeal pitta bread

Bread sticks with hummus or tzatziki style dips

Salads

Rice salad (brown rice is encouraged)

Potato Salad

Pasta salad (preferably wholegrain pasta)

Cous cous

Salad and Sandwich or Wrap Fillers

Lean Meat (e.g. chicken/turkey, ham)

Eggs

Tinned fish e.g. tuna/sardines/salmon

Vegetables

Fruit and Vegetables

A wide variety of vegetables will be promoted as basic ingredients in salad lunches. The children are also encouraged to bring chopped vegetables such as peppers or carrot sticks as part of their daily lunch and many teachers like to give their class a fruit break while finishing off their school work prior to the 10:30 yard time. We also promote dried fruit as a tasty addition to salads or simply as a quick snack.

Drinks

Water or Milk are the ideal choice of drink. We encourage children to bring in a water bottle (that can be recycled) so they can have access to water throughout the day. Hydration is important for concentration.

Fruit juices - without added sugar.

Dairy

Milk

Natural Yoghurt

Cheese (triangles/slices/ small blocks of cheddar/gouda/edam etc)

We discourage the following foods:

Yoghurts with high levels of sugar

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)

Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, energy drinks and juices.)

Cereal bars (these can often contain as much sugar as chocolate bars)

Fruit winders

Super-sized chocolate bars

We also ask that the children in the junior classes do not bring food which they find difficult to open. In particular we discourage Muller Corners, Frubes and drinks in pouches such as Capri Sun.

Useful Links with Ideas for Healthy Lunches: (these URLs may be subject to change)

<http://www.safefood.eu/SafeFood/media/SafeFoodLibrary/Documents/Education/2012-Safefood-Healthy-Lunchboxes-Leaflet-v4.pdf>

http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Healthier_Lunchbox_Leaflet_09_10_Irish.pdf

www.askaboutireland.ie/learning.../LESSON-PLANS-FOOD-AND-NUTRITION

www.indi.ie (Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute website) You will find a leaflet 'Are you packing a healthy lunch

www.healthpromotion.ie<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx> http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch_box/lunch_box.html

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/packing-school-lunchbox>

Treat Days, Special Days and Celebrations

Friday is treat day. On treat days pupils are allowed a small portion from the top shelf of the food pyramid e.g. fun size chocolate bar/small iced bun/biscuits.

Foods with artificial additives and colours e.g. Smarties, M & Ms, boiled sweets, cereal bars etc. should be avoided. Special events and celebrations e.g. food festivals, food demonstrations, end of term parties - on these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "every day food".

Other Considerations

Diabetes and Allergies

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 such as diabetes, 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.

There is a total ban on nuts and nut products due to serious allergies of some pupils.

Chewing gum is not tolerated in school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

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 by not allowing their children to bring chocolate bars or sweets to school except on treat day.

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 crisps, chocolate bars or sweets to school except on treat days.

Role of School Staff

To promote and encourage healthy eating.

To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum

Responsibility for review:

A policy review will take place in autumn 2022 co-ordinated by Máire Kenny.

Communication and Ratification

A copy of the reviewed policy will be posted on the school website and a copy will be included in the enrolment pack for new pupils.

Signed: _____(Chairperson)

Signed: _____(Principal)

Date: _____