

Whitecross National School

Julianstown, Co. Meath, A92 W291

Roll Number: 17705J

Phone: (041) 9829229

Email: whitecrossns@gmail.com

Website: www.whitecrossschool.com



Principal: Mr Patrick Doran

Deputy Principal: Ms Margaret O'Reilly

Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale and Aims

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

Encouraging children to eat a nutritious, balanced diet early on is important for a number of reasons. Ensuring they get the right vitamins and minerals in their diet will help them grow and develop optimally. They are also more likely to be energised and motivated, supporting their ability to learn. Educating them on healthy eating during childhood will also help them make healthier choices as they become adults.

The aim of this Healthy Eating Policy is to help our school community, children, staff and parents develop positive and responsible attitudes to food and nutrition and to appreciate the benefits that healthy food and drink habits make to overall health and wellbeing. In conjunction with the curriculum subjects, we aim to promote nutrition awareness and positively affect healthy food and drink choices within the school community.

This policy was created in conjunction with staff, parents and the Board of Management. For the successful implementation of this policy, it will require full support from parents and staff.

Objectives

1. To promote a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating patterns for the students
2. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
3. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
4. To help develop student concentration and improve energy levels

Lunch Breaks

The children, at present, have two breaks at which they eat their lunches. It is hoped that the children will be both encouraged by their peers and enticed by the variety of fruit and vegetables they will see being consumed around them, to try various healthy options and eventually find some that they like to eat. A full lunch must be provided to each child daily. Should a lunch not be provided, parents may be contacted and asked to leave in a suitable lunch. Children are encouraged to bring home all food that is not eaten during the school day. It is important that parents check their child's lunch box to monitor what their child has eaten. It is essential that children come to school with a freshly packed lunch every day.

Lunches/Snacks Suggestions

Suggestions for lunches include the following and would ideally include a piece of food from the four main shelves of the Food Pyramid:

- Sandwiches (made from bread of all types)
- Filled rolls (of all types)
- Wraps, pitta breads, bagels, scones
- Sandwiches, rolls, wraps and bread may have fillings of any kind- *chocolate spread is not allowed.*
- Crackers (preferably wholegrain/wholewheat) and cheese
- Yogurt, yogurt drinks and fromage frais (excluding chocolate ones)
- Cheese of any kind
- Fruit or vegetables of any kind
- Pasta, spaghetti or rice in small containers
- Combination of foods – i.e. Slices of pizza or quiche
- Slices, cubes of chopped meat, chicken, fish or hard-boiled eggs.

*Yogurts should be of suitable size and easy for infants to eat without spilling.

Suggestions for Healthy Break are as follows:

Fruit

- Any whole piece of fruit such as an apple, pear, banana or orange
- A bowl of chopped fruit such as pineapple cubes, melon pieces, grapes (cut vertically for younger children preferably) etc
- A bowl/pack of dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots etc.
- It is important that any food is made easy for infants to eat.

Vegetables

- Chopped peppers, carrots, celery sticks, cucumber etc
- Baby tomatoes or other whole baby vegetables

Drinks

It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. Almost 2/3 of the body is made up of water. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Recent studies have shown that children who are dehydrated are less able to concentrate properly, especially at subjects like Maths. Therefore, we would recommend that every child bring a drink of water each day.

Sugar

We strongly discourage food and drink of any kind which is predominantly sugar – e.g. fruit winders, cereal bars etc. Therefore we strongly recommend that such food would not be included in your child's lunch.

Foods not allowed in school, except on 'Treat Day' or school parties:

- Crisps and popcorn
- Fizzy drink
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars

Friday is our 'treat day' and children are encouraged to bring only one small treat please.

Nuts – Allergy risk

Due to the risk of allergic reactions to peanuts or products containing nuts, pupils are asked not to bring peanut butter or products containing nuts into school. Depending on allergies present amongst the children and staff in our school parents may be required to follow certain criteria when giving their children lunch. This may change from year to year as children join and leave our school community. The school will keep parents informed via Aladdin and newsletters at the beginning of each school year.

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is a good start to a child's day and gives them the energy they need to concentrate, learn and participate fully in school activities. Therefore we would encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast before coming to school.

Hygiene

Pupils in our school will be aware of the importance of food hygiene and safety, when preparing and eating lunches, e.g. washing hands, having clean lunch boxes etc.

Environment

In keeping with our ongoing environmental awareness, a Healthy Eating Policy will reduce the amount of litter in the school and will give the pupils an understanding of how people affect the world around them and how they can improve it. In doing this, we will encourage the pupils to cut down on litter produced by packed lunches e.g. using re-sealable bottles instead of cartons or re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings. Any packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal. Any fully uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

Implementation/Monitoring:

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school, they will be asked to put it away until after school. If this prohibited food is the only food the child has brought to school for lunch that day, they will be allowed to eat it. However, they will be advised to bring something more suitable to eat for lunch in future.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school, the class teacher and principal will organise a meeting with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy. It is very difficult to implement the

policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

Review Timetable

This policy will be reviewed in 2 years time and amended as necessary by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Signed:

Signed:

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

