



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School

157 Rathmines road lower,

Rathmines,

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D06 R621

Roll Number 20501K

Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale and Aims

The aim of this Healthy Eating Policy is to help our school community, children, staff and parents develop positive and mindful attitudes to food and nutrition and to appreciate the benefits that healthy food and drink habits make to overall health and wellbeing. As a school, we have an additional objective to raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food.

In conjunction with the curriculum subjects SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education), Science and the Learn Together Programme, we aim to promote nutrition awareness and positively effect healthy food and drink choices within the school community.

Additionally, we aim to protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.

The Process and the Team: Hans Dubois, Hyegeun Woo, (HTETNS Parents), Maeve Trehy (Teacher).

The policy is the result of meetings and communication between this group, during which two online healthy eating surveys were prepared and distributed to the school community in January 2020, one for adults and one for children.

Maeve Trehy attended a HSE course for teachers “Wellbeing through Healthy Eating Policy Development Training” in February 2020.

The Department of Education and Skills Circular 0042/2018 and the Healthy Eating Policy Toolkit were consulted in the creation of this policy.

The understanding of ‘healthy eating’ in this policy is based primarily on the Revised Food Pyramid (2017) as the key source of information on healthy eating messages from the Health Service Executive of Ireland.

The Food Pyramid



Healthy Eating in HTETNS

- We aspire to help each child take some responsibility for his/her health by encouraging positive choices in relation to diet. To support our healthy eating policy we ask that parents/ guardians provide children with a healthy lunch each day. A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid. When asked in the 2020 adult survey, "Would you agree with the following general guideline? please avoid 'junk food', preferably include fresh fruit and vegetables, and ideally water to drink" every respondent agreed, with one respondent requesting a clear definition of the term 'junk food'. For the purpose of this policy, we identify the red shelf on the Food Pyramid as 'junk food'.
- Foods from the green shelf: fruit and vegetables (vitamin/mineral rich) and brown shelf : carbohydrates (energy) are especially encouraged (to ensure recommended daily portions are met).
- Children are encouraged to bring water to drink in school in a non-spill nipple top bottle.
- The revised Food Pyramid separates the top, red shelf from the rest of the pyramid. The top shelf includes foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt. In the 2020 survey 24 respondents out of 26 voted to keep treats for home and out of school and we will put this into practice in HTETNS with the following exceptions:
 1. In terms of having a treat on Fridays, 80% of adults voted to retain this practice. Therefore, children are allowed to bring a small, individual treat to school on Fridays.
 2. As voted by 96% of the parents in the 2020 survey, children may receive a small top shelf food item on special occasions authorised by the Principal and Senior Management Team such a school tour or end of term celebration.
- We discourage treats being distributed by teachers / visitors to the school eg. student teachers, sports coaches, after school activity leaders as voted for 68% of respondents in the adult 2020 survey. This is a school policy and does not include the After School service operated by Kids Inc.
- Staff will support the healthy eating policy and will not offer sweets to children as rewards or prizes.
- Examples of Healthier Snack Options: Extra piece of fruit or vegetables, unsalted crackers, natural or low-fat yoghurt, plain breadsticks, plain rice cakes
- Children will normally have two food breaks during the day and will be given adequate time to eat in line with the Department of Education and Science guidance on time allocation. The children will be nurtured and encouraged to eat their lunch within the time allocated.
- In the interest of promoting our policy of saving treats for home and for allergy or religious (as well as health) reasons, cakes, buns or treats (sweets and chocolate) for birthday celebrations will not be distributed. 69% voted for this in the adults 2020 survey.
- In support of the Green School principles, we encourage reusable lunch containers and all waste materials are brought home.
- In order to promote the healthy eating and safety of all children in the school and prevent the spread of infection, we ask that the children do not share food or drink. However in the case where a child forgets their lunch, other children in the class may share an item of food as directed by a staff member. Children are not to share food utensils or drinks containers.



Prohibited Foods:

- Because of the risk of severe reactions to allergies, we ask that no nuts or nut containing foods be brought into the school.
- We also request that children do not bring FIZZY DRINKS, SWEETS, CHOCOLATE, BISCUITS, CRISPS to school.
- Chewing gum is prohibited as well.

Food Allergies

- It is important to note that the health and safety of children with serious allergies will take precedence over other issues. It will be necessary to introduce additional precautions or restrictions in classes in which some children have serious allergies. In these cases a note will be sent home by the class teacher specifying the allergen(s) and requesting that the children do not bring these foods to school.
- It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and the class teacher if their child has an allergy to a specific food. The class teacher and parents will meet to complete a Notification of Medical Condition/Healthcare Plan. The whole school staff will be informed of the child, their allergy and the appropriate medical treatment should the child have an allergic reaction. If the child requires treatment with an Epi pen in case of an allergic reaction, two must be provided to the school by the parents. *Members of staff are trained in the administration of an Epi pen.*

Suitable Drinks for Children

- Drinks should always be included in a packed lunch. Extra water should be included on PE days and in warmer weather.
- Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children, and we would strongly encourage parents to only supply these two options.

Educational Measures

Within SPHE, Science and/or the Learn Together programme, all children will receive appropriate lessons on healthy eating.

The children will be taught the following units from the SPHE & Science curricula:

- SPHE Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class) Making choices (See Teacher Guidelines pp 11-13)
- Science Strand Living Things: Strand Unit: Myself: Human Life Processes (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class) (See Teacher Guidelines p.10-11)

Parents / guardians of incoming junior infant children and new children to the school will be informed about the Healthy Eating Policy.

Resources

- www.healthyreland.ie/ Great information on new food pyramid, suggested meal plans and fact sheets
- www.safefood.eu Great ideas for the daily lunch box
- www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/
- The school will make use of outside agencies to support this policy, as judged appropriate by the teaching staff in a given school year. For example, the Food Dudes program was run during the year 2019/2020. This EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme is funded by Bord Bia. www.fooddudes.ie/

Other Tips and Hints

Keep lunches in fridge if made the night before.

Use a small insulated cool bag especially in warmer weather.

Cut sandwiches into small manageable portions especially for younger children.

Peel and/or chop fruit for younger children.

Avoid items that children cannot eat without assistance.

Try to give a variety of foods.

Vary the types of bread (wholemeal, granary, high fibre rolls, bagels, pitta and sliced bread)

Review and Evaluation

This policy was created in January 2020.

The revised food pyramid 2017 is the key source of information on recommendations from the HSE.

Training was received from HSE Community Dietitians.

The policy was reviewed and approved by children Parents (PTA), Staff and the Board of Management.

We appreciate that encouraging children to choose certain foods is not always easy. However, with the increase in obesity, type 2 diabetes and the prevalence of dental caries, we are encouraging best practice especially during school hours and after school activities held on site. *For this policy to be successful, we need support from the whole school community as if the children see each other following the policy, it will be easier for them to feel it is fair and be happy to comply.*

This policy will be reviewed on a three-year basis, with the next review in 2023.

Reviewed:.....9/3/23.....(date)

Sylvia O'Halloran
9/3/23.

Chairperson, Board of Management