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**St Michael’s NS,**

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**A81 EA37.**

***Principal: Ms F Whelan***

***Vice Principal: Mrs R Campbell***

**Healthy Eating Policy**

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. 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). To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we are introducing a healthy eating policy.

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. The wider curriculum also provides an opportunity to learn and explore about food and healthy lifestyles.

***Through these Healthy Eating guidelines Saint Michael’s N.S. Donaghmoyne have set out the following aims and objectives as part of our Healthy Eating Policy.***

**Aims**

* To promote the personal development and well-being of the child as part of the school curriculum.
* To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

**Objectives**

* To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy by positive teacher and staff modelling.
* To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

The Healthy Eating Guidelines will be reviewed every two years and the policy will be visibly displayed in the school.

**HEALTHY EATING GUIDELINES**

**Breakfast:** Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school.

**Lunch:** is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre/roughage.

**A healthy lunchbox should include a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid i.e.**

* at least 2 portions from the bread/cereals group: wholemeal bread / pitta bread / small tortilla wrap / crackers / pasta / rice
* 1 portion from the meat/alternatives group: lean meat or other fillings
* 2-3 portions of fruit and vegetables: fruit (peeled and chopped for small children), raw vegetables (washed and chopped), salad.
* 1 portion from the dairy group.

**Use the Food Pyramid as a guide.**

**Drinks: Water and milk are the best options.**

* Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of tap/plain water to school every day. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
* Pure unsweetened fruit juices or well diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash: 8 parts water) may be included but only as part of children’s main lunch meal, to reduce the risk of tooth decay.
* Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage. As the school does not have adequate storage facility for milk, we encourage pupils to reach their daily calcium recommendation of 5 servings, through consumption of cheese & non dessert yoghurt at school and through consumption of milk outside of the school day.

**Others:**

* As part of our Healthy Eating Policy, we are introducing a ‘fruit and veg’ break each day from Monday to Thursday at 11.00a.m.
* Children can take **1 small treat on a Friday** which can be eaten at 11am. This treat might include 1 of the following items: 1 mini sized bar or 1 plain rice cake or 1 plain biscuit or 1 small fruit muffin or 1 small slice of brack or 1 small pot of custard or 1 small pot of rice pudding.
* Chocolate spreads, chocolate dips, cheese dips, chewy/sticky bars, cereal bars, sweets, popcorn, lollipops, chewing gum, crisps, fizzy drinks, juice drinks and nuts (due to allergies), **are not permitted**.
* When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer.
* On special occasions as decided by the school, non-food related awards will be encouraged.
* Green Flag School ***-*** As a green school, children are also asked to:
* take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons
* put only fruit peel into the compost bins
* not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in October 2022.

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

Date: October 2022