

## Healthy Eating Policy

At Malahide Portmarnock Educate Together National School, children are encouraged to be aware of and learn about healthy eating to promote health, wellbeing and the energy and enthusiasm that enable them to enjoy their experience of school and to be actively engaged in their learning.

### **Aims:**

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of each child
- To promote the health of the children and to provide a foundation for healthy living

### **Objectives:**

- To enable the children to learn and appreciate the importance of good nutrition
- To encourage the children to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet

### **School Lunch Breaks**

There are two eating breaks during the school day.

The children eat at their tables in the classroom. We encourage the children to keep the food in the lunch boxes or on the lids for reasons of hygiene. The children wash their hands and make use of anti-bacterial hand-washes in the school. For the purpose of recycling, and to cut down costs in school, we ask that all of our children take home their waste packages, leftover food etc. in the lunch boxes to dispose of in their home bins.

### **Allergies**

Because of the risk of severe reactions to allergies, we ask that no nuts be brought into the school, and that eggs are limited too. Allergies also dictate that the sharing of food should be avoided, and we would appreciate if parents would advise and remind their children of this. Younger children especially are tempted by the lunches they see in other lunch boxes.

### **Independent Eating**

We would like to encourage independent eating at all times and at all ages: children, if they have them in their lunch boxes, should be able to open and eat a yogurt without spilling; peel a banana or an orange, open a cheese string or a juice bottle etc. Each child should also be enabled to sit at the table and eat calmly. Lunch times can be a good opportunity for socialising, chatting and making friends.

### **Suggestions for healthy food**

- Sandwiches
- Filled rolls
- Wraps, pitta bread, bagels

- Crackers and cheese
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Fruit and vegetables
- Pasta or rice in small container
- Quiche
- Meat slices, chicken, fish

### **Suggestions for drinks**

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit juice (preferably unsweetened and diluted)
- It is advised that all children have a named water bottle so that they can have frequent drinks during the day.

### **Sugar**

We strongly discourage food which has high sugar content especially:

- Fizzy drinks
- Sweets
- Chocolate bars
- Chocolate/icing-covered cakes
- Biscuits/cereal bars
- Crisps
- Chewing gum

### **Nuts**

Due to the risk of allergic reactions to a variety of nuts or products containing nuts, we ask that children are not given peanuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, cashew nuts, nut butters or Nutella in their lunches.

### **Breakfast**

A nourishing breakfast is a great start to a child's day and gives him or her the energy needed to fully participate in, learn from and enjoy school activities.

### **Hygiene**

The children are made aware of the importance of hygiene before, during and after eating snacks and lunches. They are encouraged to wash their hands and keep their tables clean, as well as using their lunchbox lids as plates instead of putting their food on the table. Signs are displayed in the classroom and school to encourage the children to be aware of this. The tables and classroom are cleaned thoroughly by a professional cleaner, as are the toilets and the rest of the school.

### **Litter and the Environment**

In order to encourage environmental awareness, and to take action to prevent litter in general and in the school in particular, we would like to ask our families to use re-sealable bottles instead of cartons, and re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings. Any packaging or food left over in a child's lunchbox will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating. As part of our Green School Flag programme, children participate in 'Waste Free Wednesdays' whereby they are encouraged to bring lunches to school with reusable packaging.

### **Birthdays/Parties/ 'Treats'**

While we are happy to fully acknowledge each child's birthday, we discourage cakes, sweets and party bags. Not only do these 'treats' not fit in with our Healthy Eating policy, giving them out to the class also takes up

a lot of teaching and learning time throughout the year and can put pressure on other parents to supply similar treats on their children's birthdays.

Because of our ethos, in particular, our concern that no child is made to feel an outsider in any way, we also ask that invitations to parties and other arrangements to do with birthday celebrations are organised discretely by and among adults outside of the class and school so that no child will feel left out or under pressure to hold his or her own party.

Every child in the school is made to feel special on their birthday. If in doubt, please consult with the class teacher.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on January 15th 2020.