

Healthy Eating Policy

This policy was formulated in 2016 in consultation with the Board of Management, teachers, children, staff and parents in Powerscourt National School. Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community including children, families and teachers.

This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum. Healthy eating is covered in the following curricular areas:

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE):

Strand Unit:

- Taking Care of my Body; Food and Nutrition (Curriculum: J.Infants-6 th Class)
- Making Choices (see Teacher Guidelines pp11-13)

Science:

Strand Unit:

- Myself: Human life Processes (Curriculum: J.Infants -6th class) (see Teacher Guidelines p.10-11)

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

As part of our overall school policy the Healthy Eating Policy helps to promote the health of each child and to provide a foundation for healthy living. Our school aims to provide a holistic education for our children and health of mind and body is an ideal we aim for in all our pupils.

Aims:

The aims of our policy are:

- To make the “healthier choice the easier choice”
- To promote nutritional awareness e.g. looking at the ingredients in food- what is good or bad
- To positively enable healthy eating among school-age children
- To raise levels of concentration and energy within class through the consumption of healthy food.

- To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children which it is hoped will become lifelong eating habits
- To provide members of staff, parents and those involved in school activities with clear information
- To protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies
- To support the school's environmental policy in insisting on reusable containers, minimum use of wrappers etc.

Healthy Lunches:

Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch, which helps to maintain their level of concentration in the classroom throughout the day. A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.

These are: -

- Bread/ Cereals - Fruit/ Fruit juice and vegetables
- Milk, cheese and yogurt
- Meat/ chicken/fish and alternatives Here are some simple guidelines to help you and your child make that simple choice
- Drinks: water, unsweetened juice or milk- should be in a recyclable plastic bottle (no glass bottles please) which can be refilled every day.
- Fizzy drinks are NOT allowed.
- Yoghurt in tubs Sandwiches/crackers (wholemeal preferable) with a healthy filling
- NO chocolate spread please.
- All types of fruit (for younger children oranges should be peeled and ready to eat)

Prohibited Foods:

- In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children the following foods are prohibited, except on Fridays and other special occasions in school such as the end of term:
 - Crisps
 - sweets
 - bars
 - Chocolate/chocolate spreads
- On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class.
- Due to nut allergies, Powerscourt National School will be a nut free zone at all times.

These may be special occasions such as:

- End-of-term parties Halloween School trips
- Occasionally the teachers may reward children with sweets. This is at the teacher's discretion. The teacher will also take into account allergies or dietary requirements within the class.
- Teachers may use sweets in subject areas where a teaching objective is being met e.g maths, science, geography etc.

Other specific occasion or event

Although it is a special occasion treats are not allowed on a child's birthday. N.B. Cans and glasses are not permitted for safety and litter reasons. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment. Children bring home all food waste.

Healthy Eating week is a tool to promote healthy living within our school. The school will also take opportunities that may arise to participate in initiatives which promote healthy eating. (Food dudes etc)

Implementation:

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as they are not permitted to eat "junk" in school. 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.

Success Criteria:

We will know the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods.
- The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff and the level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom.

Roles and Responsibility:

- Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include variety.
- Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others.
- Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits

- The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, children –will work together to promote the progress of this policy.
- All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on its performance which will be reported back as appropriate to the Principal and staff
- The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the BoM

Timeframe for implementation:

November 2016

Timeframe for Review:

November 2018

Useful Information:

- The Health Promotion unit has a booklet called “Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools”. It is available to download from www.healthpromotion.ie
- The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch-boxes. www.indi.ie
- The Voluntary Health Insurance website (VHI)has a section on children returning to school after sickness which includes advice on healthy lunches www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-011.jsp

Ratification and Communication:

The Board of Management ratified the policy at its meeting on 20th March 2017after it had been drafted, circulated and amended. The policy has been communicated to all staff and children. It will be promoted in the school as part of the SPHE policy and its importance will be stressed in newsletters.