



**Dalkey School Project
National School
Educate Together**

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Rational

It is widely accept that good nutrition is essential for school children. Children also need to learn the basis of good eating habits and this happens both at home and at school.

In *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools*, produced by the Department of Health and Children, it is stated, "A positive attitude to food should be encouraged. Children should enjoy their food. It is important to communicate the message that all foods have a place in a balanced diet. Foods should not be labeled as 'good' or 'bad'."

Good levels of nutrition have a positive effect on children's health and also help to improve attention levels and concentration spans. We therefore need to work towards building good eating habits from an early age. The school however recognizes that due to a number of factors not least of which may be children who will not eat a wide variety of foods or who have special diets for whatever reason, that this may pose significant challenges for some parents.

Current Practice

Children have 2 breaks during the school day, a ten minute break from 10.20 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and a longer break from 12.15 midday to 12.45 p.m.

Teachers allow 5/10 minutes before one of these breaks for children to eat, while the teacher reads a story or the class listens to music. The children are encouraged to observe good table manners and to eat as much of their lunch as possible.

From time to time there are cake sales in the school.

From time to time teachers will organize cooking lessons for classes and these will be used to teach the principles of good nutrition.

Policy

The school encourages children to bring a healthy lunch to school. Parents are asked when choosing lunches for their children to opt for items such as sandwiches, yoghurts, fruit, vegetables, water, milk or fruit juices. Crisps, fizzy / energy drinks and chewing gum are not allowed, either in school or when out on trips. If a child brings such an item to school, they will not be allowed to consume it and will be reminded not to bring it again. If this is a frequent occurrence, a letter to parents reminding them of the policy may be sent home.

As mentioned above, some diets followed by religious and ethnic groups or for health reasons (gluten free, diabetic or allergy related) can be quite complex. Therefore children are not permitted to swap lunches.

If a child has a severe reaction to certain food types, parents/guardians must inform the school and supply a medical note from their doctor, and in conjunction with the class teacher, arrange substitute food supplies for treats.

For safety reasons, glass bottles are not permitted.

Promoting Healthy eating

The school promotes healthy eating in a number of ways:

- With the support of the PTA, visits to classrooms with healthy, tasty ideas for lunches by parents.
- Lunch box ideas/recipes in the school Newsletter from time to time
- A 'fruit day' in class
- Class lessons on the food pyramid
- Healthy eating week

Looking after the Environment

As a school we try to take our responsibilities for the environment seriously. As part of our efforts to reduce our waste, we ask that all children take home all rubbish from their lunches. We have compost bins in the yard for banana skins etc.

This policy will be reviewed in 2-3 years.

Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on _____ date

Signed _____ Chairperson

