St Joseph's PS, Strangford.

Healthy Eating Policy

Reviewed 2016

RATIONALE

As a Health Promoting School, the governors and staff of St Joseph's Primary School are committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and a healthy diet. In accordance with the **Every Child Matters Agenda** 2004/2005, and to support the five outcomes for children, promoting a healthy life style is integral to our curriculum and we recognise the importance of offering children the opportunity to make informed choices about what, when, where and why they eat.

We have been a Healthy Eating school for the past 13 years, achieving 10 consecutive Gold Awards from the Save Our Smiles Programme, which has sadly come to an end. However, we still welcome annual visits from the dental health school nurse and maintain the good practice that is now fully embedded into our school ethos.

As a school we know that food is fundamental to the quality of a child's life, not just in providing essential nutrition but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- to improve the health of pupils, staff and the whole school community by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues including what constitutes a healthy diet;

- to ensure pupils are well nourished at school and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and a safe, easily available water supply during the school day;

- to ensure that food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs;

- to introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

ORGANISATION - CURRICULUM

We regard healthy eating education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum.

Healthy eating education forms an important part of our school's curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the The World Around Us and PDMU curriculum throughout the school.

All pupils should have the opportunity to learn about safe food preparation and to learn about where food has come from. Pupils learn about the requirements for plant growth, the food chain and the components of a healthy, balanced diet.

Annually all our pupils actively become involved in the growing of fruit and vegetables in our 'edible school yard'. This allows children to see how specific fruit and vegetables grow from 'seed to table'. Our children tend the seedlings by frequently watering and weeding them under teacher supervision. We also make full use of our recently purchased greenhouse.

ORGANISATION – MANAGEMENT OF EATING

At St Joseph's Primary School we have agreed the following statements:

- All pupils from P1-P4 are provided with a healthy snack each break time (fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and water) at the cost of £1.00 per week.

- P5-P7 pupils bring their own healthy snack to school daily (fresh fruit or vegetables)

- All pupils from P1-P7 brush their teeth daily on return to their classroom after break time.

- All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day.

- Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, crisps, and cakes are not permitted as everyday snacks in school or as part of lunch boxes. Chewing gum and fizzy drinks are also not permitted on the school premises or while the children are representing the school.

- Children's lunch boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods in accordance with the **'Guide to Healthy Eating'** which is made available to parents. The guidance recommends a balanced selection of foods which should be available to the children in their lunch box.

- Because we recognise that there is no such thing as "bad food", we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation.
  Special events such as Christmas parties and celebration of the Sacraments are times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff should remind the children that this is an occasional treat and not every day food.

- The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information should be displayed in the staff room, school office and in the school dining area.

- Pupils are taught not to share packed lunches and parents are reminded about the need to avoid sending in packed lunches containing nuts. This is communicated through the school newsletter.

- As we are a small school, we can easily monitor food brought into school from home. Although the parents have been 100% committed to our healthy school policy to date and fully compliant.

  Portion size– no child is made to finish all the food that they are offered because we know that appetites vary from person to person. However, we do actively encourage the children to ‘try a little bit more’ if they can to ensure that they are not hungry later on in the day.

SCHOOL MEALS

The school meals service is offered through the Education Authority, South Eastern Region. As we are a small school, our meals come from St Brigid's Primary School in Downpatrick. We work closely with the catering manager who visits the school regularly and with the EA Catering Services to ensure the healthiest possible meals are provided.

There are strict guidelines determining the meals that are available throughout the course of the week and these are in accordance with the new **Healthy Food Standards in Schools** which came into force in 2006.

The termly school lunch menu is displayed in the school hall for parents. It is also available to parents termly. This means they have the opportunity to discuss meal choices with their children to ensure they are aware of what will be served on specific days.

The principal should monitor the quality of the meals on a regular basis.

DINING ROOM CODE OF CONDUCT

- We will:
- respect the children at all times;
- give the children time and space to eat in a calm and attractive environment;
- help the children to see that enjoying food and eating meals with others contributes to a happy lifestyle;
- encourage the children to find out more about achieving a healthy balance;
- encourage the children to try new foods and flavours in a supportive environment;
- promote school food to children and parents;
- listen to and accept constructive feedback and respond accordingly.

The dining room is well staffed with supervisors and teachers who assist the children in a variety of ways such as keeping table surfaces clean and tidy and assisting the children with their meals.

The tables and chairs are bright and attractive and allow for the pupils to sit in friendship groups promoting the idea that lunch times are a happy, social occasion.

Children should be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunch time and should be given plenty of time to eat. This may be achieved by:

• sitting freely with their friends;

• being encouraged to try a wide range of foods at lunchtimes to develop a taste for a greater variety of foods and achieve a balanced diet;

• entering and leaving the dining hall in an orderly way; to show respect for other diners;

• parents or carers will be advised if their child is not eating well;

• demonstrating good manners in the hall e.g. using quiet partner voices and saying “please” and “thank you”;

• seeking permission from a Supervisor before leaving the dining / lunch area.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that staff and parents are informed about the Healthy Eating Policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively.
It is the school's role to ensure that staff are given sufficient training, so that they can teach effectively.

The school should liaise with external agencies regarding the healthy eating education programme and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and work within this framework.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we should:

- inform parents about the school healthy eating education policy and practice;
- encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;
- inform parents about the best practice known with regard to healthy eating so that the parents can support the key messages being given to children at school.

Development, Monitoring, Review and Evaluation of Policy

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with staff. As part of the school's monitoring and evaluation process, we continually strive to adapt and improve our practice to meet our pupils' needs. This policy will be reviewed in 2019.

Signed Principal: _____

Signed Board of Governors: _____