

MILFORD NATIONAL SCHOOL

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Healthy Eating Policy:

Introductory Statement: “Children’s eating habits will strongly influence his/her chances of living a healthy life-style”. With this in mind our Healthy Eating Policy was formulated back in 1996. It was intended to encourage children to get into good dietary habits. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. The present policy was formulated as a result of a review and updating of the original policy. A copy of this policy will be kept in the school office and may also be viewed and downloaded from the school web-site- www.milfordns.ie

Rationale: Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community: 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 in Milford N.S.

SPHE: Primary School Curriculum:

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

SCIENCE:

- Strand: Living Things ; 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.

Content:

1. 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)

2. Prohibited Foods:

In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children the following foods are prohibited, except on treat days:

Crisps, sweets, bars

Chocolate/chocolate spreads

Fizzy drinks

On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class . These may be special occasions such as:

End-of-term parties

Halloween

School trips and events

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.

Food Dudes: In the final term of the 2009/2010 school year, Milford National School took part in a Healthy Eating Programme entitled "Food Dudes". This was sponsored by An Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the scheme received a "counteracting obesity" award from the WHO.

Through the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, the Food Dudes programme encourages children to enjoy a healthy diet, and it reinforces the healthy eating culture which has prevailed for many years in the school. The programme was a resounding success and Milford School intends to encourage children to pursue and continue the positive eating habits engendered by the programme this year and in forthcoming years.

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

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:

September 2010

Timeframe for review:

January 2012

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 BoM ratified the policy at its meeting on September 8th 2010 after it had been drafted, circulated and amended. The policy has been communicated to all staff and children, and has been downloaded on to the school web-site. It will be promoted in the school as part of the SPHE policy and its importance will be stressed in newsletters.