**St. Teresa’s National School**

**Healthy Eating Policy**

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at *St. Teresa’s N.S.* we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy starting from 2007 and which is now being reviewed.

**Aims**

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

**Objectives**

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fiber (roughage).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Bread & Alternatives** | Savories | |
| Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal  Rice – wholegrain / Pasta – wholegrain  Potato Salad  Wholemeal Scones / Bread sticks  Crackers / Pitta bread | Lean Meat  Chicken / Turkey  Tinned Fish eg tuna / Sardines  Cheese  Quiche | |
| Fruit and Vegetables | | Drinks |
| Apples, Banana,Peach  Mandarins, Orange segments  Fruit Salad, Dried fruit  Plum Pineapple cubes  Grapes  Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Tomato,  Coleslaw | | Milk  Fruit juices  Squashes, i.e. low sugar  Yoghurt |

**A word about Milk**

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

**We ask that children do not bring the following to school:**

### Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

### Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)

* Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
* Sweets
* Chocolate biscuits/bars
* Cereal bars
* Chewing gum
* Popcorn (sweetened or salted).

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers may from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

**A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Fats  Sugar  Sweets etc | Sparingly |
| Meat, Fish  Peas / Beans | 2 portions per day |
| Milk, Cheese  Yoghurt | 3+ portions per day |
| Fruit and Vegetable | 4+ portions per day |
| Bread Cereals and Potatoes | 6 + portions per day |

**Treat Day**

Friday will be our treat day. On this day, children can include one SMALL food item from the ‘not allowed’ list (e.g. fun sized bar, two biscuits...) Please note: popcorn is only allowed on Fridays.

**Green Flag School**

Our green school motto is:

‘GET GREEN, KEEP GREEN, MAKE IT INTO A REGULAR ROUTINE!’

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

* take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons
* put only fruit peel into the compost bins
* not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**