

St John Bosco Junior Boys' School

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated by members of the teaching staff in consultation with the Parents' Association and the Board of Management of St. John Bosco Junior Boys' school.

At St John Bosco Junior Boys' School we support and encourage our pupils to develop healthy eating habits from a young age. 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). What we eat affects our own immediate health, and for children it will make a significant difference to how healthy they are in later life. As part of our Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes to help them make healthy choices both at school and at home.

Rationale:

This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the parents and children who attend our school. The focus of this policy is to support parents to encourage their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. Knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students as part of the SPHE Primary School curriculum.

In support of this rationale, nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the Primary School curriculum in St. John Bosco Junior Boys' school.

Linkage with the Curriculum:

The SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education) Food and Nutrition Curriculum for Primary school outlines key issues relating to food and nutrition and recommends that these are explored in an age appropriate manner. Key messages that are consistent and fact based can help promote healthy eating and assist with decision making and the formation of attitudes and beliefs around food and nutrition. Healthy eating and physical activity represent a balance which is essential for healthy living.

SPHE (Social Personal & Health Education): Primary School Curriculum

- Strand Unit: Taking Care of my Body; Food and Nutrition, Making choices
(Curriculum: Junior Infants – First Class)

Science

- Strand: Living Things ; Strand Unit: Myself: Human life Processes
- (Curriculum: Junior Infants-First Class)

Physical Education

- All strands and strand units

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School:

At St John Bosco Junior Boys' school we believe in the holistic education of each child. We aim to provide the children with knowledge and education which will enable them to make informed decisions and ultimately improve their health both mind and body. The strands in SPHE, Science and Physical Education Primary School Curriculum help us promote this policy in our school.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are

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

Objectives

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

Content:

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 fibre (roughage). Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide their 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 such as breads and cereals, fruit and vegetables, milk, cheese, yogurt and meat/ chicken/fish and alternatives.

In recent years the traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is being replaced by a range of convenience foods such as 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 beginning of Junior Infants.

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

Breads and Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal
Rice –wholegrain
Pasta- wholegrain
Wholemeal scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Wraps
Pitta bread

Savouries

Lean meat
Chicken/Turkey
Tinned fish e.g. Tuna
Cheese
Quiche

Fruit and Vegetables

Apples, banana, peach, mandarin oranges
Orange segments, plums
Fruit salad, dried fruit, pineapple cubes
Grapes, cucumber, sweetcorn, tomatoes
Carrot sticks

Drinks

Un-flavoured water
Milk
Yoghurt

All types of fruit are acceptable. (Please be aware that small children may not be able to peel some fruits. Sending in pre prepared fruit will encourage your child to eat fruit as a snack.

Prohibited Foods:

In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children and to take into consideration the children who suffer from food allergies and intolerances, the following are prohibited

- All nuts
- Peanuts
- Peanut butter
- Nutella
- All chocolate spreads
- Fizzy drinks
- Chewing gum

Please note: If a child brings any of the prohibited foods to school, the food will be returned home in their lunch box.

Children are discouraged from swapping lunches.

We ask that children do not bring in 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)
- Juice (including fizzy and fruit flavoured water, Capri Sun and smoothies etc.)
- Sweets
- Lollipops
- Chocolate bars
- Biscuits
- Fruit winders

Drinks:

Water

It is very important that your child drinks plenty of water throughout the school day. We recommend refillable plastic water bottles with sports tops (no glass bottles please). These bottles can be refilled during the day. We discourage juice drinks, flavoured water and smoothies. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

Milk

It is recommended that 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 your 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.

Our School Day

There are two breaks during the school day:

- Morning Break is from 10.30am until 10.40am.
- Lunch Break is from 12.00pm until 12.30pm.

The children should have a small snack (for example, a piece of fruit or a sandwich) which they can take to the yard for small break. They can eat the remainder of their lunch in the classroom before lunch break. If your child is bringing a tub of yoghurt, a spoon must be provided. Yoghurts and drinks are not allowed in the yard.

School Lunches

Parents should be aware that lunches are provided in school which the children may avail of. As part of the Department of Social Protection School Meals scheme, we provide sandwiches (ham, corned beef, cheese and chicken), fruit (bananas, apples, mandarins) and milk each day. As these are available parents are advised to be aware of this when sending in a packed lunch and to be mindful of portion size.

Treat Days/ Friday Treat

Parents/guardians may give a small treat to their own child on a Friday such as a mini-bar/fun size bar. A regular size bar is too big. Teachers may give treats to their own class. These may be special occasions such as End-of-term parties e.g. Halloween, School trips and other specific occasions or events.

Caring for our environment

Please note that cans and glasses are not permitted for safety and litter reasons. Children are asked to put all wrappers, empty milk cartons and waste into their lunchboxes so that parents can see what their child has eaten in school and to reduce litter and protect our school environment.

Birthday celebrations

As there are children with food allergies and intolerances in the school, Birthday cakes and Birthday Party Bags are not allowed.

Children with Special Needs

We recognise that there are certain dietary issues and requirements as a result of specific conditions (e.g. ASD, ADD and ADHD). The specific needs and requirements of a child with special needs will be taken into account in relation to this policy. Every effort will be made to accommodate the child's dietary needs whilst also encouraging and promoting the need for healthy food and drinks.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Parents/guardians** have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include a variety of healthy foods for lunch each day. **It is very important that the Parents/guardians of a child with special dietary needs inform the school of this.**
- **Children** have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others.
- **The whole school community, staff, parents, guardians and children** will work together to promote the progress of this policy. All involved 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 **Board of Management**.

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 provide very useful information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch-boxes. www.indi.ie

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented from November 2016

We ask that all parents and children make every effort to adhere to the suggested guidelines in this policy.

Ratification and review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2016 and will be reviewed every three years. The policy will be communicated to all staff and children, and will be uploaded 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 school newsletters.

Signed

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date