

Shronell N.S. Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated following discussions with parents and pupils and a nutrition talk given to parents on Tuesday, 22nd February 2009 by Annis Logue, Nutritional Therapist. It was subsequently ratified on 10th June 2009 and re-ratified on 27th September 2012.

Rationale

In light of present thinking on good concentration and behaviour in class it was felt that we should move forward with our healthy eating policy. Children's health and well being are always to the forefront of our thinking in Shronell N.S.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our school cherishes all pupils equally and to aid them in achieving their potential, good nutrition is seen as a necessary foundation stone.

Aims

- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and of dental hygiene.
- To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
- To rise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre packed food, juice cartons etc.

Definition

A healthy lunch consists of a piece of food from the bottom 4 levels of the food pyramid. Foods that are allowed and encouraged include fruit, raw vegetables, cheese, yoghurts, fromage fraise, brown bread, wholemeal rolls, crackers, scones, plain buns, fruitcake, brack, nuts, seeds and popcorn (plain).

Drinks that are encouraged include water, milk, fruit drinks (preferably 100% juice) in a re-usable container / beaker, no glass bottles permitted.

Foods that are tolerated include white bread, white bread rolls with filling e.g., ham, tuna, eggs and plain biscuits. Unbreakable flasks for winter lunches – soups, sausages, pasta.

Guidelines

Principal, class teachers and assistant staff will give positive recognition to children for healthy choices.

Current practice in Shronell N.S. consists of the following: -

1. No fizzy / sports drinks e.g. lucozade sport, crisps or chewing gum, hard / sticky sweets, peanuts (allergy and high salt content), bars.
2. Encouragement to use recyclable drink containers.
3. Small fun sized treats allowed on a basis of "one or none" i.e. better to bring none but one is tolerated.
4. The class teacher will regularly monitor lunches.
5. Assistant staff to keep teachers updated of any concerns.
6. Children understand that it is not acceptable to make a negative comment about the appearance / smell etc of another person's food.

More cohesive and best practice procedures to be used by the staff in implementing this policy including providing positive modelling and supportive attitudes.

Some of the suggestions from the students in Shronell N.S include the following activities to promote healthy eating:

- **Buy It Monday:**
Fruit shop run by senior students.
- **Healthy Eating Week:**
We envisage this happening in September / October so that good habits are formed at an early stage of the year.
- **“Different and Delicious”:**
Children get a point for having an unusual fruit / veg in their lunchbox when class reach an agreed number of points (suggestion 30), they get a treat e.g. homework pass, extra art, etc.
- **School Garden:**
The children would like to initiate planning a school garden, to grow their own fruit/vegetables. We will look at a long-term plan to facilitate this.
- **“Taispeain Dom”:**
The older children visit the younger classes and say a fruit / vegetable as Ghaeilge and the children hold up the named fruit in the air.
- **Children draw pictures of their favourite healthy lunch**
Put pictures on the wall during Healthy Eating Week as a reminder to eat healthily. Bring home pictures after class display and show your parents that is what you would like in your lunch box.
- **Children will be able to use fridge in office if they bring in milk.**
- **Make a list and stick it on the fridge at home saying what would like in your lunchbox.**

Some of the suggestions from the parents in Shronell N.S include the following activities to promote healthy eating:

- A visit by a dentist / dental hygienist.
- Assorted fruit plate on regular basis – willing parents to help.
- Breakfast club for children who haven’t had breakfast before school.

Promotion of this policy

At all times we promote a Healthy School environment providing positive modelling and a supportive attitude of eating healthily. Activities will include baking, testing opportunities, making smoothies and experimenting with unusual fruit and vegetables.

Outside speakers and agencies will be used in whatever way possible to promote healthy attitudes to food and nutrition. Posters and other materials, including the food pyramid, will be used also to further promote healthy eating.

Throughout the year, the healthy eating theme will be integrated into many subjects as possible e.g. links will be made with the data strand of the maths curriculum i.e. displaying the number of fruits being eaten on graphs/ bar charts. We will endeavour to take part in any competitions/programmes that promote healthy eating.

All parents will be encouraged to support the policy.

If children bring discouraged foods / drinks to school:

- They will be told about the lack of nutrition in the discouraged food / drink.
- Allow the child to be involved in the decision making process of what to do
 - will it be brought home?
 - will it be taken away from them?
 - will the child be allowed eat it?
 - Will an alternative be provided if the remainder of the child's lunch is not sufficient?

- If unhealthy foods / drinks are brought to school on a constant basis parents will be contacted and made aware of the situation.

Occasional treats will be allowed as this provides a balanced approach e.g. Santa brings mini bags of sweets to the children at Christmas. Occasional small treats may be given by the teacher.

Exceptions to this policy can be made on occasion such as:

- Santa's visit at Christmas providing each child with a mini bag of treats
- End of term parties
- Halloween parties
- School trips
- School events such as Communion / Confirmation, concerts and matches.

Each parent will receive a copy of this policy.

Parents of new Junior Infants will each receive a policy on Open Day each year and parents of other new children will receive one on enrolment of child / children.

Success of this policy will be monitored by communication of staff with students and parents. All classes will receive a minimum of 2 lessons on healthy eating per year, as per SESE curriculum.

Implementation of this policy will begin in September 2009.

Review of this policy will involve staff, pupils, parents, Board of Management and Parents Council.

Co-ordinating this review will be the responsibility of the Principal.

Ratification of this policy took place on 10th of June 2009.

This policy was adopted in staff meeting 19/9/12 and ratified on 27th September 2012 by

Rev John Egan, Chairperson B.O.M.