

Castleknock Educate Together National School

Healthy Eating Policy

1. Castleknock Educate Together National School through this Policy aims to help all those involved in our school community, children, staff and parents, in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to good health.
2.
 - a) Nutrition - what people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing the health of school children and also staff who work in schools may eat one of their main daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The taught curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles.
 - b) There are two food breaks during the day. Children will be allowed to eat and drink at these times and will be allowed to drink water at other times during the day.
 - c) A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from the first four shelves of the food pyramid. We wish to encourage children to eat healthy, nutritious foods for example; sandwiches, raw fruit and vegetables, crackers, cheese and salads.
 - d) Cans and glasses are not permitted for safety and litter reasons. Healthier choices of drink include water, milk and unsweetened juice.
 - e) We ask parents to aim to provide lunches which contain as much unprocessed food and as little packaging as possible. If children continue to bring inappropriate foods as part of their lunch, they will be asked to bring them home and a note will be sent home.
 - f) Children will be encouraged to return unused and unfinished items home in their lunchboxes. This will allow parents to ascertain what their children have eaten and will cut down on the quantity of packaging being deposited in school litter bins.
 - g) All children should have a re-usable lunch box and drink bottle for environmental reasons.
3.
 - a) All classes will receive a minimum of two formal lessons on healthy eating and the subject will be raised informally during the year.
 - b) A copy of the food pyramid will be displayed in each classroom.
 - c) Third and fourth classes may use material from the Taste Buds Programme (Safe Food).
 - d) Children from various cultures will be encouraged to discuss foods from their own countries.
4. Parents will be supplied with advice on healthy food choices from the HSE. A nutritionist will make available some information on healthy food choices. (See Appendix A and B)
5. Teachers will assist young children with their lunch and will provide supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
6. The Healthy Eating Policy will be reviewed within two years.

Policy ratified at Board of Management meeting 16/06/2010.

Chairperson CETNS:

Chris Lennon

Appendix A

Foods to be encouraged	Foods which are discouraged
Sandwich (Wholegrain bread better than white) Raw Fruit Raw Vegetables Crackers Cheese Salad Pasta Noodles Yogurt Popcorn Water Milk Fruit Juice (Unsweetened and 100% fruit content) No added sugar squash (Well diluted) Plain biscuits eg rich tea or digestive	Chocolate Sweets Crisps Fizzy Drinks Sweetened Fruit Juice <i>(Fruit juice is already high in natural sugars and sweetened fruit juices contain added sugar or artificial sweeteners)</i> Shop bought cakes Fruit Winders Cereal Bars <i>(Cereal bars although appear to be quite healthy many are actually filled with sugar or fat)</i>

Appendix B

HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES

Information from HSE and Nutritional Therapist regarding Healthy Eating Choices

The foods children eat have a significant effect on their physical, emotional and mental health. Healthy school lunches can help:

- Maintain energy levels
- improve concentration and memory
- keep moods and emotions stable
- lessen sugar cravings

FOODS TO INCLUDE

Healthy school lunches should include a combination of carbohydrates, protein and fruit and vegetables.

NUTRIENT	WHAT'S IT GOOD FOR?	EXAMPLES
CARBOHYDRATES	Good for energy and moods	Slow-releasing carbohydrates are best for long-lasting energy. Go for wholemeal bread, wholemeal pitta bread, wholemeal pasta, beans, lentils, ryvita, oat cakes, quinoa
PROTEIN	Good for growth and repair, healthy skin, strong bones, hair and nails.	Fish: salmon, tuna, sardines etc Meat: chicken, ham, turkey etc Eggs, cheese, milk, yoghurt, hummous, lentils, beans, seeds, quinoa
FRUIT & VEGETABLES	Good for a strong immune system to fight off infections	Go for a good colour mix - 'rainbow foods' - to ensure your child gets a wide variety of vitamins and minerals. Red: tomatoes, chopped peppers, red onions, watermelon, beetroot, strawberries, raspberries etc Orange: grated carrots or carrot sticks, mango, melon cubes, peppers, dried apricots, oranges, tangerines etc Green: avocado, lettuce, baby spinach leaves, celery sticks, watercress, alfalfa sprouts, apple, pear, kiwi etc Purple /Blue/Black: blueberries, blackberries, purple grapes, figs, dates etc Yellow: banana, sweet corn, pineapple cubes, peaches etc

FOODS TO AVOID

Sugary foods: sweets, chocolate, wingers, cakes, biscuits, cereal bars etc

Sugary drinks: fruit squashes, fizzy drinks and fruit drinks as these are usually high in sugars, sweeteners and colourings

Reduce: refined foods (white bread, white pasta, croissants etc).

HEALTHY LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

The following are some ideas for healthy lunches.

SANDWICHES:

Aim to use wholemeal bread, including wholemeal pitta bread. Watch out for brown bread as this is often white bread that's simply coloured brown! Here are some ideas that you can mix and match for sandwich fillers:

Protein	+	Fruit & veg
Egg	+	watercress, red onion, cucumber, celery
Tuna or salmon	+	Sweet corn, tomatoes, red pepper
Chicken or turkey	+	Avocado & alfalfa sprouts
Hummous	+	Cherry tomatoes, grated carrot and red onions
Cottage cheese	+	Pineapple & grated carrot
Ham or cheese	+	Tomatoes and cucumber

For a change, rye crackers (eg. ryvita) or oat cakes can be used instead of wholemeal bread. You can use cookie cutters to make the sandwiches into fun shapes.

Remember, lunch doesn't have to come in a sandwich! You can also try smoothies, dips, salads, pasta dishes and soups (for the older children).

SMOOTHIE RECIPES

Children love smoothies and it's a great way to pack their lunch with lots of fruit as well as yoghurt for healthy digestion, a strong immune system and a good source of protein. Aim to use the natural, bio-live yoghurts - you can sweeten the yoghurts by adding fruit to them (mashed banana, berries etc).

Simple smoothie recipes:

Blend together: 1 carton natural yoghurt, 1 banana and a handful of strawberries. You can also add ½ to 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseeds. Flaxseeds give children the good fats, essential for a healthy brain and balanced moods.

Blend together: 1 carton natural bio-live yoghurt, 1 banana, ½ mango. You can also add ½ to 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds.

For a green smoothie: blend together 1 carton natural bio-live yoghurt, 1 banana and ½ avocado. You can also add ½ to 1 tbsn ground flaxseeds.

If your child has a dairy allergy, you can substitute the yoghurt with plain soya yoghurt or oat or almond milk.

Super smoothie

The following smoothie recipes are a meal in themselves. They combine protein (yoghurt and seeds) with slow-releasing carbs (oats) and plenty of fruit.

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 handful of fruit - fresh or frozen eg. Berries
- 1 carton natural bio-live yoghurt
- 1 tbsp ground seeds eg. Flaxseeds, sesame, pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- 1 handful of oats

1. Blend all ingredients together until smooth; if too thick add some milk. If you'd like it sweeter add a little honey or maple syrup.

SOUP IN A FLASK (3rd - 6th class only)

Warm and comforting on Winter days, soups are an easy way to get lots of vegetables into your child's diet. These soups include beans and lentils which ensure your child is getting their protein intake, fibre and lots of B vitamins to support energy and concentration during the school day. Here are two examples:

- Carrot and lentil soup:

- Chop an onion, cook on a low heat in olive oil for about 5 minutes. Take care not to brown or burn onions.
- Add about 6 carrots, 1 sweet potato, one leek, and about ½ - 1 cup of red lentils. Add up to 1 ½ litres of stock. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 40 minutes. Serve as it is or blend.

For added flavour, you can add some spices (ground coriander, cumin, cardamom and nutmeg) once the onions are cooked.

Energy boosting Bean casserole

- 1 tin chickpeas, drained
- Handful of green or brown lentils, rinsed
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon mild curry powder
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 potatoes, chopped
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped

Tin of tomatoes

1 litre of vegetable stock

- Heat oil gently in a large saucepan.
- Fry onion and garlic for about 5 minutes
- Add the curry powder and stir for 1 minute
- Add the carrots, potatoes, red pepper, celery, tomatoes and lentils
- Add the stock, bring to the boil and then simmer for 35 minutes

Add chickpeas and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

SALADS

Choose a good colour mix of fruit and veg and combine with some protein. For example:

Mango & Chicken Salad

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6. mixed salad leaves | - 1 avocado - cut into small pieces |
| 7. 1 small mango - cut into large chunks | - handful black olives, stoned |
| 8. 2 spring onions - finely sliced | - cooked chicken - cut into small pieces |
| 9. 6 cherry tomatoes - halved | |

Combine all the above and mix with a salad dressing, if desired.

Rainbow salad with a choice of protein - ex: Salmon / egg / chicken / chickpeas. (Tinned wild red salmon or fresh salmon is fine, tinned chickpeas are fine too)

Combine the choice of protein with a good colour mix of vegetables:

- **red:** cherry tomatoes, chopped peppers, red onions, beetroot etc
- **orange:** grated carrots, mango, peppers
- **green:** avocado, lettuce, baby spinach leaves, celery, watercress, apple

You can also add wholemeal pasta, potatoes or quinoa to the salad.

DIPS

Carrot, celery and red pepper sticks with a hummous dip, guacamole or cottage cheese. Celery sticks can be filled with tasty fillings, for example - cream cheese and raisins.

SEEDS

Encourage your child to munch on seeds during the school breaks. Seeds are a valuable source of the good fats which are so important for the brain, moods, heart and skin. Seeds are also a good source of protein and fibre. Fill a small container with pumpkin and sunflower seeds or sprinkle them on salads. Or, add flaxseeds into yoghurts and smoothies (use ground flaxseeds - buy them ground or grind them yourself).

HEALTHY TREATS

There are lots of treats that are both healthy and tasty:

For example: banana bread, carrot cake, banana wedges, flapjacks, wholemeal muffins and scones. These are healthy when home-made and when the sugar is kept to a minimum or substituted with fruit (raisins, bananas) or honey. Popcorn is another treat (Not for children under 5 as risk of choking) as are dried fruit (dried mango, apricots, raisins, dates, figs etc).....

Recipes for healthy versions of the above can be found in recipe books such as: *Cooking Without Made Easy* by Barbara Cousins, *Immunity Foods for Healthy Kids* by Lucy Burney, *Blazing Salads Cookbook*.

As home-made cakes are permitted in school, you will find some healthy and tasty recipes below.

Banana & coconut wedges

- | | |
|--|--|
| 10. 55g / 2oz butter or margarine | - 55g / 2oz dessicated coconut |
| 11. 1 eating apple | - 55g / 20z oat or buckwheat flakes |
| 12. 225g / 8oz bananas (weighed after peeling) | - ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp mixed spice |

1. Set the oven to 200°C / 400°F / gas mark 6 and grease a 23cm / 9in round sandwich tin.
2. Melt the butter or margarine
3. Peel, quarter and core the apple and process with the butter or margarine, bananas, vanilla extract and mixed spice until smooth and creamy
4. Add the coconut and oat or buckwheat flakes and process until the mixture is combined
5. Place in the sandwich tin and level the surface
6. Bake for about 25 minutes or until firm to the touch and golden brown. Cut into wedges while still warm and allow to cool for 5 minutes in the tin before placing on a wire rack
7. Store in an airtight tin when cold and eat within 3 days or freeze.

(Adapted from *Cooking Without Made Easy* by Barbara Cousins.)

Banana Bread

13. 120g / 4 ½ oz sunflower margarine
14. 150g / 5 ½ oz honey
15. 2 eggs
16. 2 bananas
17. 180g / 6 ½ oz wholemeal flour
18. 1 tsp baking powder

1. Set the oven to 190°C / 375°F / gas mark 5 and grease a 450g / 1lb loaf tin
2. In a large mixing bowl whisk the margarine and honey together until light and fluffy.
3. Beat the eggs and add to the mixture.
4. Peel and mash the bananas until smooth. Add to the mixture.
5. Mix the flour and baking powder together and add to the wet mixture.
6. Pour the mixture into the tin. Smooth the top.
7. Bake in the centre of the oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour.
8. Remove from the oven and leave to cool for 10 minutes. Remove from the tin and place on a wire cooling rack until completely cooled.

(Adapted from *Blazing Salads Cookbook*)

Spotted Dog - Soda bread

19. 225g / 8oz plain white flour
20. 225g / 8oz wholemeal flour
21. 1 level tsp bicarbonate of soda (bread soda)

22. 1 level tsp salt
23. 75 - 110g / 3 - 4 oz sultanas
24. 1 egg
25. 350ml / 12fl oz buttermilk

1. Set the oven to 220°C / 425°F / gas mark 7 and grease a baking tray
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix the flour and bicarbonate of soda and add the salt and fruit. Lift the flour and fruit up with your hands and let fall back down again. This adds more air to the bread and should make it lighter
3. Break the egg into the bottom of your measuring jug and add the buttermilk until it reaches 400ml / 14fl oz. Whisk together
4. Make a well in the centre of the flour. Pour most of the buttermilk and egg into the flour. Add more milk if necessary - the dough should be soft, but not too wet and sticky.
5. When the dough comes together, place on the greased baking tray in a round shape, about 5cm / 2in in height.
6. Cook in the oven for 10 minutes. Then turn the oven down to 200°C / 400°F / Gas mark 6 for 35 minutes or until cooked.

(Adapted from *Ballymaloe Cookery Course* by Darina Allen)

FLUIDS

Children should have drinks at both breaks and throughout the school day, if necessary. Dehydration can contribute to low energy, poor concentration, constipation and headaches.

Water and milk are the best drinks for children. Filtered or bottled mineral water is fine and you can reuse plastic water bottles once they are washed out with warm soapy water.

Fruit juices: look for fruit juices that are 100% fruit. It is best to dilute fruit juices (half juice and half water) since they are high in natural sugars. Avoid fruit drinks and fizzy drinks as these contain added sugar or artificial sweeteners.

And finally, it's important that children enjoy their food, so, once it is safe for them to do so, get them cooking, chopping, blending and inventing new recipes for their lunchbox.

FURTHER READING ON HEALTHY EATING

- *Immunity Foods for Healthy Kids* - by Lucy Burney
- *Optimum Nutrition for Babies and Young Children* - by Lucy Burney
- *They are what you feed them* - by Dr Alex Richardson
- *Optimum Nutrition for your Child's Brain* - by Patrick Holford
- *What really works for kids* - by Susan Clark

Mary Dunne, Nutritional Therapist, BA, DIP NT, MNTOI