

**St. Mochta's National School
Clonsilla, Dublin 15**

**Board of Management
Healthy Lunches Policy**

In line with our aim of promoting health awareness, our school has developed a healthy school lunch policy. There is strong evidence to suggest that there is a link between what children eat and drink in school and their behaviour and general work rate in class. We promote this policy with a view to ensuring that your child gets the most of his/her time in school as well as promoting good dietary habits for later in life.

- There will be five treat days each school year, one at Halloween one before Christmas holidays, one before Easter holidays, one before summer holidays and on school tour day.
- Our reward systems will also reflect the healthy lunch policy.
- Occasionally, there will be whole school, class or individual treats for the children which will be in line with our healthy lunch policy.

We are aware that if every parent co-operates with these arrangements, then we will have a very different learning environment and level of healthy eating awareness out of which the only winner will be your child!

Some children within our school have nut allergies. Kindly ensure you do not include nuts, or any products containing nuts, as part of your child's lunch.

Drinks

- Fluids are an important part of a child's diet. Healthier choices of drinks include water, milk, unsweetened juice and diluted sugar-free squash.
- Junior and Senior Infant Classes are requested to use a beaker or plastic bottle labelled with the child's name.

Food

- Base the main part of the lunch on starchy foods such as pasta, rice, breads, rolls, scones and crackers – encourage wholegrain or wholemeal varieties.
- Include at least one piece of fruit, e.g. apple, banana, orange.
- Include some protein, e.g. lean meat, chicken, tuna, cheese, egg or hummous.
- Add a portion of low-fat milk or other dairy food such as cheese or yoghurt.
- Include salad vegetables in sandwiches & salad boxes, e.g. lettuce, tomato, cucumber, carrot & use vegetable sticks.
- **Wrappings and other left over items from children's lunch boxes will be taken home each day by the child in their lunch box.**

Special Diets

- **Parents/Guardians should inform the class teacher of their child's special diet.**
- We are aware that diets followed by religious and ethnic groups and special diets such as gluten free, diabetic, milk free, nut free, etc., can be quite complex. However, once teachers are aware of a child's special needs, they can advise against swapping and sharing of food.
- **In general, for safety concerns such as those listed above, children should not share any part of their lunch with other children.**

Children in all classes are requested not to bring any of the following items in their lunch box:-

- No crisps or related foil wrapped products, e.g. popcorn, hula hoops, hunky dory, etc.
- No fizzy drinks of any description.
- No chocolate bars.
- No sweets, sweet biscuits, sweet buns or cakes.
- No chewing gum - banned at all times.
- Do not send in birthday cakes to the class.

The Food Pyramid

The food pyramid is designed to make healthy eating easier. Eat foods from each shelf of the food pyramid in the correct amounts each day. This way, you'll get the balance of energy and nutrients you need for good health. Foods that are like each other sit together on the same shelf and can be swapped. So if your children aren't great potato eaters, don't worry – offer them rice or pasta instead. Plenty of variety is the key to getting the balance right!

You don't have to get the balance right at every meal, but try to get it right over a whole day or the week. Go for options that are lower in fat, salt and sugar whenever you can.

So in a nutshell, the whole family should try to eat:-

- plenty of bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and cereals – going for the wholegrain varieties whenever you can
- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- some milk, cheese and yoghurt
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- a small amount of foods and drinks that are high in fat or sugar.

For ideas on healthy lunches and further information on The Food Pyramid, use the links below.

Helpful Links www.fooddudes.ie, www.safefood.eu, www.bordbia.ie