



HEALTHY EATING POLICY



Healthy Eating Policy Jonah Special School

Introduction

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at Jonah Special School we encourage the students to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. Jonah Special Schools Healthy Eating Policy outlines how the school supports healthy eating practices through the promotion of healthy lunches and healthy snacks and by other means. The SPHE Guidelines aims to promote personal development and wellbeing of the student to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

Jonah Special School is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving Teachers, Special Needs Assistants, parents and children to ensure healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of school life.

Aims and Objectives

- To encourage a positive attitude to food.
- To promote a healthy diet.
- To educate about different foods.
- To promote good eating habits.
- To encourage children to have a healthy diet.
- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growth and development and for staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balance diet.
- To explore food preferences in a balanced diet.

Rationale

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).

Children form their eating habits for life from an early age. A good diet and plenty of sleep, fresh air and exercise are essential to the growing child. We ask parents to allow plenty of time in the morning for a healthy breakfast. Breakfast is perhaps the most important meal of the day. Not only does breakfast break the child's long overnight fast and help concentration, it also lays down the foundation for healthy eating for the rest of the day.



Children's lunches sometimes tend to be low in fibre and high in fat and sugar. The food pyramid will offer a guide for a healthy and varied diet for your child. Sandwiches and fruit are healthier than sweets and biscuits. Check with your child that he/she has the right amount to eat.

Suggestions for a Healthy Lunch

- Breads – whole grain breads, rolls, bagels, wraps, soda bread or pitta.
- Bread substitutes – oatcakes, plain rice cakes, pancakes or crackers.
- Fillings – cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, pate, egg, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, coleslaw, salad or banana.
- Hot leftovers in a flask – curry, pasta, soup, baked beans, rice, stew, lasagne or noodles.
- Cold Left overs.
- Fruit – apple, oranges, banana, grapes, pear, plum, apricots, melon, grapefruit, pineapple, strawberries, raspberries, mango, blackberries or blueberries. Remember to peel and/or cut fruit and vegetables into bite sized pieces.
- Raw Vegetables – tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, carrot sticks, celery sticks, broccoli, cabbage or cucumber.

Food Items ~~Not~~ Permitted in School

- Fizzy Drinks.
- Sports Drinks.
- Chocolate.
- Sweets.
- Crisps.
- Biscuits/cakes/muffins.

Treat Days, Special Days and Celebrations

Friday is treat day. On treat day students are allowed to have a small treat.

There are other specific days during the school year where children are permitted to have special treats –

- Social Outings.
- Students Birthdays.
- School Trips.

Food Dudes Programme

Food Dudes Schools are encouraged to engage with the Food Dudes programme to support healthy eating and we have participated in this programme. The programme in Ireland is organised by Bord Bia and is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and



the EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. It encourages children to eat more fruit and vegetables at schools and at home. Healthy eating remains an important issue as 1 in 4 children in Ireland are overweight or obese. In the first national rollout, 98% of primary schools completed the programme. Freshly prepared fruit and vegetables, rewards and Food Dudes lunchboxes are provided free of charge to participating schools, and a designated project manager will assist in implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Parents are responsible for providing healthy school lunches for their child.
- Children are encouraged to participate in making their own healthy school lunch.
- All members of staff promote this policy through regular verbal and visual reminders and show good examples to the children.
- Teachers will teach about healthy eating as part of the SPHE Curriculum.
- If children bring items of food that are not permitted in school, the items will be kept in the office until the end of the school day and will be sent home in the child's school bag.

N.B. Parents/Guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the Principal.

Jonah Special School

Healthy Eating Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Jonah Special School at its meeting held on:

Ratified by the Jonah Board of Management on: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Principal

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Next Review Period: *September 2028*