

## ***HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY***

### ***MAYNOOTH EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL***

#### **Preamble.**

Maynooth Educate Together N.S is a co-educational school with mainstream classes and classes catering for children with ASD. Our ethos espouses the following principles ie we are multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centered and democratically run. We aim to provide an education that fosters development of childrens talents, abilities and personalities. We support children in developing attitudes which will enable them to become open-minded, creative, respectful, responsible and caring members of society. The school recognises that parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children.

In devising this policy, due consideration has been given to Section 9 of the Education Act 1998. This policy has been formulated by the school Principal and staff in consultation with the Parents Association and has been ratified by the Board of Management.

#### **Healthy Eating in Childhood**

- Can help improve performance in class and at play
- Can help improve concentration
- Meets children's nutrients needs for growth and development
- Lays the foundations for good healthy balanced eating habits for life
- Assists in maintaining a healthy weight for children which helps prevent early onset of Diabetes and Cardiovascular disease

#### **Why Have a Health Promotion Policy?**

- It creates an awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity and their link to a healthy life
- It improves the nutrition standard and eating habits of all in school
- It helps to clarify the school's position on foods encouraged/discouraged
- It acts as a guideline for any new staff or families joining the school
- Assists consistency in the messages children are receiving from school and home.

#### **Aims/Purposes/Rationale**

- To encourage physical activity
- To encourage healthy eating
- To improve dental health
- To encourage children to experience a wide variety of healthy food

- To help the children understand the link between a healthy diet and a healthy, active lifestyle
- To educate children for living and for life
- To help alleviate the litter problem in the school and encourage recycling
- To provide a supportive environment within the school, actively encouraging good health.

### **Procedures/Guidelines**

- The staff will encourage healthy eating and deliver the relevant aspects of the curriculum to the children in the area of health education.
- Children will be encouraged to participate in sporting activities as part of the schools healthy eating/healthy lifestyle policy.
- An awareness of the food pyramid will be created and the children will be encouraged to follow the guidelines as much as possible
- Food can only be eaten at break time and lunch time
- No eating in the toilets
- Litter from lunches will be taken home by pupils
- Any uneaten food will be brought home so that parents are aware if the lunched are not being consumed.
- Children will be encouraged to recycle lunch litter at home.
- Children will be allowed a small treat (chocolate coated biscuit eg. club milk, snack bar) on Fridays.

### **Lunch Breaks**

- Children will be given sufficient time in the classroom to eat their lunch
- Children will not share lunches. Some diets followed by religious or ethnic groups or for health reasons (gluten free, diabetic or allergy related) can be quite complex. **Therefore, children are not permitted to swap lunches.**
- If a child has a severe reaction to certain food types, parents/guardians must inform the school and supply a medical note from their doctor.
- From September onward, no birthday cakes or party bags will be allowed in the school. (It is felt that this is in keeping both with the current economic climate and healthy eating, as it has been a regular occurrence and a pressure on parents )
- Teachers will not generally give food rewards in class.
- From time to time parties maybe arranged in the school e.g. end of term. In these instances treats will be permitted.

### **School Curriculum**

- Healthy eating will be taught as part of SPHE (The Social, Personal and Health Education Programme) throughout the year
- Food safety and hygiene will be promoted in the school and at home ie. Washing of hands, storing of food and a clean place to eat.

- Healthy foods and drinks will be encouraged at school events such as Sports Day and school tours
- Children's individual diet requirements for cultural or religious reasons will be respected
- Educational programmes eg. Food Dudes / Fit Factor will be promoted in the school.
- Each class will have two thirty minute PE sessions a week.
- Children will be encouraged to join in with the various physical activities both during and after school hours.
- W.O.W –Walk on Wednesday will be implemented in the 2013/2014 school year.

**Where possible all school lunches should contain the following**

- A drink
- Fruit or vegetable
- Carbohydrate
- Protein

It is of huge benefit for children to remain hydrated and if they bring plain water they will be permitted to drink it throughout the day.

**Friday Treat Day**

- Over the years, Friday has been associated with treat day. Children often bring in a small treat such as a small chocolate bar, a biscuit, slice of cake, bun, homemade popcorn, some forms of yogurt desserts.

**The Following Foods Are Not Permitted**

- Chewing Gum
- Lollipops
- Fizzy drinks
- Sweets,
- Biscuits,
- cakes,
- cereal bars,
- chocolate,
- crisps/nachos

We request that parents/guardians adhere to the school's healthy eating policy at all times. If children bring foods from the list that is not permitted they will be reminded of the healthy eating policy and a standard letter will be sent to the child's parents/guardian reminding them of the school's policy and requesting that it is followed.

## **Lunch suggestions from the community nutrition and dietetic service HSE**

- Adequate fluids of a non-sugery, non-fizzy type: milk, water, unsweetened flavoured water, milk shake, yoghurt drink, homemade vegetable soup, unsweetened fruit juice, low sugar cordial or squash.
- Fresh fruit: bananas, grapes, orange segments, plums, pears, apple slices, kiwi (cut in half and eaten with a spoon. Tip: squeeze lemon juice over peeled fruit to prevent it going brown).
- Dried fruit: apricots, raisins, peaches.
- Fingers of raw vegetables: carrots, celery, cucumber etc. on their own or with a yogurt drip.
- Salad or salad fillings: tomatoes, peppers, sweetcorn, carrot and celery sticks, butterbeans, beetroot, onions, chives/scallions.
- Other fillings such as lean bacon, lettuce and tomato, sliced meat, tuna or salmon with salad.
- Bread – bagels, rye, soft/crusty rolls, baps, pittas, crackers or crispbreads. Wholegrain bread makes the healthiest and most filling sandwiches.
- Rice cakes, pasta, rice or potato salad.
- Milk-based puddings and yogurts (with spoon), yogurt drink, fromage frais and cheese.
- Maybe vary the size and shape of sandwiches.

### **Review**

This policy will be referred to regularly to check that it is being consistently implemented by all staff. Policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

Approved by Board of Management;

Date: 15/9/2014

Signed :