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**The Board of Management,
St. Mark's Senior National School,
Springfield, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.**

CRA: 20204589

Phone: (01) 4513138

Fax: (01)4527808

Email: principal@saintmarks.ie

Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme in St. Mark's SNS, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy:

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
2. To promote good health and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
3. To educate the pupils about different foods and to respect each child's cultural and ethical beliefs.
4. To facilitate improved concentration and learning.
5. To develop awareness and good practice around those with nut and other food allergies.

Objectives of our Healthy Eating Policy:

1. To enable the pupil to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and for staying healthy.
2. To enable the pupil to take some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy and balanced diet.

How We Achieve These Aims:

1. **Formal Learning:** The pupils will learn about food, and become familiar with good nutritional practices, as part of their SPHE Programme. Emphasis will be placed on learning about the Food Pyramid which will show the children the different food groups. Pupils will be encouraged to identify the necessary nutrients contained in food. Students will be taught about energy-giving foods (eg: sweets and chocolate are good in themselves when taken in moderation, but if taken in excess they cause an imbalance in the diet. Pupils will learn that most foods are healthy if taken in moderation.
2. **Informal Learning:** Pupils will be praised for having healthy lunches, and for sampling and eating new foods and their hot lunches. Emphasis will be placed on what is a healthy lunch. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to implement the school's healthy eating policy.

3. Curriculum Support: Whole school community wellbeing initiatives will take place throughout the school year. This will give opportunities for pupils to engage in healthy eating and place responsibility on the children, with the support of the Student Council, to promote healthy eating and wellbeing in the school. Classes will engage in promotional initiatives such as Incredible Edibles, a trip to Bloom, Cool Dudes, Healthy Food Making Course, etc.

Lunch Breaks: There are two lunch breaks during the school day. Saint Mark’s Senior NS provides healthy snacks for the Sos Beag and Hot Lunches for Lón.

1. Sos Beag- Fruit/Vegetable/Snack Break. The pupils are provided with healthy snacks such as fruit, vegetables, rice cakes, breadsticks etc. Accommodations are made for children with sensitivity/intolerance/allergy to any of the above foods.
2. Lón - The pupils are provided with Hot Meals. The menu is available from the school.

For pupils who do not avail of the Hot Lunches, the following guidance is provided by the Health Service Executive (HSE) Healthy Eating Guidelines:

<u>Bread and Alternatives</u>	<u>Savouries</u>
Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal Rice- wholegrain Pasta- wholegrain Potato Salad Wholemeal Scones Bread Sticks Crackers Pitta Bread	Lean meat Chicken/ Turkey Cheese Quiche

<u>Fruit and Vegetables</u>	<u>Drinks</u>
Apples, Banana, Peach, Orange segments, Mandarin, Fruit Salad, Dried Fruit, Plum, Pineapple cubes, Grapes (cut in half), Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Tomato, Coleslaw	Milk Water

<u>Dairy</u>
Milk Cheese Natural Yogurt

A simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid*

Fats, Sugars, Sweets	Springly
Meat, Fish, Peas, Beans	2 portions per day

Milk, Cheese, Yoghurts	3+ portions per day
Fruit and Vegetables	4+ portions per day
Bread, Cereals, Potatoes	6+ portions per day

**Informed by Health Service Executive (HSE) Healthy Eating Guidelines*

The following is a list of foods and drinks pupils are not permitted in the school:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks and share bags)
- Sweets
- **Nuts**
- **Food containing nuts - because of the prevalence of nut allergies in our school, any foods containing nuts or traces of nuts are strictly forbidden.**
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Hot chicken fillet rolls
- Nutritionally dense foods
- Cereal bars which contain chocolate or nuts.
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Frubes
- Lollipops
- Fizzy Drinks (including fruit-flavoured water, juices etc.)

* Occasionally pupils may receive a sweet treat from staff, for example at Christmas, Easter etc. We understand that children with allergies may not be able to accept these treats and in consultation with parents, an alternative will be given to them.

Nut Allergies - Nut Product Free School

All members of the school community must be aware that there are pupils and staff in St. Mark's Senior N.S. who have a serious allergy to nuts and nut products.

Any person with a serious nut allergy can suffer a severe reaction called Anaphylactic Shock when they come into contact with this allergen by consuming or touching a nut-containing food.

In some cases, an allergic reaction can be triggered by touching surfaces or through airborne contact with the allergen. We advise staff, parents and pupils not to bring nuts or any product containing nuts to school.

Classrooms with pupils/staff who have known nut allergies will have a poster stating 'Nut Product Free Zone' posted on the door.

This means that the following items should not be brought into school*:

- Packs of nuts
- Peanut butter or Nutella sandwiches
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts
- Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts
- Cakes made with nuts
- Any home-cooked meals for packed lunches that contain nuts

*This is not an exhaustive list.

Children with medical conditions or allergies:

Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet or whose child has a food allergy should contact the school with details.

A record (including photographs) of all children with underlying medical conditions and food allergies is kept in the school. This record is reviewed annually.

At the beginning of the school year, an email is sent to all parents/guardians informing them of any children in their child's class with a specific food intolerance or allergy. Parents will be asked to exclude these food items from their child's lunch.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians that all medications stored at the school are within date and labelled appropriately. Labels must contain the child's name and instructions for use.

Green School Flag

As we are a Green School the children are asked to:

- Compost all waste from the Hot School Lunches
- Use paper lunch bags or reusable lunch boxes
- Use reusable beakers/drinks containers.
- Abstain from bringing in cans, glass or cutlery (spoons allowed) for safety reasons.

Promotion of the Policy:

All teachers and staff promote this Healthy Eating policy in the classroom through the SPHE curriculum. During lunch time teachers will monitor what food is being eaten. Teachers will praise the pupils' healthy choices and discourage the eating of unhealthy foods.

General:

On Friday, children may bring in one small treat. Teachers will inform pupils if they may bring 'sweet' items on other occasions, e.g. Christmas parties, school tours, etc. Such decisions are at the discretion of the class teacher.

Should a pupil bring in a restricted food/drink on a school day, other than Friday, the pupil will be reminded of the school's Healthy Eating Policy.

If a pupil persists in bringing unhealthy food to school, their parent/guardian will be contacted and the Healthy Eating Policy will be brought to their attention.

Signed: Mary Cullen .
Mary Cullen
Chairperson BOM

Date: 12/3/24

Last Review Date: 21/3/23