

St. Mary's Primary School Draperstown



Healthy Living and Food in School Policy

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Mission Statement

"If good lifestyle habits are instilled at an early age, they would become habits of a lifetime". *Rose Gray*

At St. Mary's P.S. we have a whole school approach to healthy living. We work hard to provide healthy options for our children in school and develop skills and knowledge to encourage and support healthy eating outside school. We believe that good health supports successful learning. We know that healthy children learn well. We also know that a child's ability to attend school is affected by health and so making our school a healthy place is our primary objective.

As a healthy school we adopt a process of self-evaluation and action planning which aims to improve school health and wellbeing in relation to the three key elements of our work in the following areas:

- Ethos and environment
- Quality of learning and teaching
- Quality of management

We believe that the school is an ideal setting for health promotion. As part of the community, the school is a place where many people learn and work. It is our aim that the health promoting strategies which we have put in place will impact positively on all members of our school community.

Background

We chose to go forward with a Healthy Living and Food in School policy by:

- Consulting all members of our school community.
- Involving our School Council and Eco-Council.
- Planning and working with the canteen staff.
- Providing information on our school website.
- Extending and developing our whole school Healthy Living Theme in January each year.
- Liaising with Judith Hanvey to evaluate our practice and review our policy.
- Work with Judith Hanvey and NEELB TV to make a short film outlining Healthy Living and Healthy eating throughout the school.

- Developing a Fronter Healthy Living page for each class highlighting progression in healthy living and healthy eating throughout the school.
- Broadening the children's experiences - food theme days.
- Developing our Foundation Stage Break initiative.
- Involving parents in a variety of initiatives: e.g. Family Meal Day, education sessions.
- Providing a variety of after school activities to encourage fitness and exercise.
- Entering and achieving Gold in the Action Cancer Health Action Awards.
- Developing our School Garden and extending our after-school gardening club.
- Encouraging more cooking and preparing food in the classroom.
- Introducing after-school cookery classes

Aims

To work in partnership with families and professionals to support children:

- to be healthy
- to be safe
- to enjoy and achieve
- to make healthy, informed choices
- to make a positive contribution

Objectives

1. To work in partnership with agencies working with children and young people to deliver an effective and consistent approach to healthy eating practices, and to ensure that individual cultural and dietary needs are met.
2. To raise awareness with the whole school community and to develop a positive approach to nutrition and health education.
3. To encourage responsibility and accountability in offering healthy choices to children.

4. To promote a healthy lifestyle as being both desirable and enjoyable for our children and to allow them to make independent and informed choices.

Policy Statement

1. All staff working with children in St Mary's P.S. adopt and promote this healthy lifestyle policy.
2. Everyone working with children in St. Mary's present consistent information on healthy eating options and aim to provide healthy meals,
 - Snacks at Break time
 - Dinners
 - Packed Lunches
3. There will be access to fresh drinking water throughout the day.
4. There are opportunities for relevant training and development in Health Education.
5. A range of teaching methods and resources are used to promote healthy eating e.g. Activities using as art, music and drama is used and expertise is sought from external agencies. E.g. Action Cancer, The Dairy Council, local sports clubs, the Ulster Council, Derry County Board.
6. Monitoring and evaluation is carried out by the principal, classroom teachers, classroom assistants, supervisors and all canteen staff.
7. Snack times/mealtimes are an opportunity for positive social interaction and promoting social skills and to this end we extend invitations to parents to eat with their children annually.
8. Parents and professionals are encouraged to be good roles models for healthy eating.
9. Food is celebrated and seen as an important part of culture and tradition. This is highlighted at our annual school festival and our theme days.
10. A variety of healthy food options is made available and new tastes are actively encouraged.
11. Oral health care is promoted and support services used when appropriate.
12. Parents are consulted on food provision and healthy eating, guidance and advice is provided by professionals.

Partner agencies

- School Canteen Staff
- School Nurse / Dentist
- Regional Schools Co-ordinator
- Food Standards Agency
- The Dairy Council
- Action Cancer

The Importance of Nutrition for Children aged 4 - 11

A nutritionally balanced diet is important in childhood and adolescence to ensure optimum development, at a time of rapid growth. Infants, young children and adolescents need an adequate supply of nutrients such as iron to prevent anaemia and calcium to ensure healthy development of teeth and bones. A balanced diet in childhood and adolescence is not only important for growth but for learning, promoting positive habits and attitudes towards healthy eating. An inadequate or unbalanced nutritional intake may not only affect growth and development in childhood or adolescence but may also impact on health problems, such as heart disease, later in life.

At St. Mary's P.S we encourage children to bring a healthy snack for break and to have healthy foods in their lunch box. For break time snacks and lunch, children are encouraged to bring fruit, yoghurts, bread, milk or water.

Oral Health Promotion

Oral health promotion and dental health education is encouraged by an increased awareness of the main dental health messages. Visits from dental nurses/students is used to raise awareness, improve oral hygiene and care.

Diet: Reduce the consumption and especially the frequency of intake of drinks, confectionary and food containing sugar.

Tooth brushing: Clean teeth thoroughly twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.

- A soft to medium textured brush should be used to brush all surfaces of the teeth and gum margins
- A small pea sized amount is recommended for children under 7 years of age

Dental Examinations:

- Everyone should have an oral examination at least once a year.
- Children and those at risk from oral disease should be seen more regularly, advised by the dentist.

Drinks:

- All members of staff have access to water throughout the day. Children have the option of using the school water bottle.

Healthy Lifestyle Promotion

At St. Mary's P.S children have the opportunity to participate in numerous activities and competitions throughout the year.

- Indoor and outdoor inter- schools competitions - Football for boys and girls, hurling and camogie. This promotes enjoyment and participation for all.
- Fun Athletics inter-schools competitions - Pupils are engaged in fun and skill based activities in mixed groups.
- After School Clubs - Camogie, hurling, football, golf and dance.
- Lunchtime Walking Club for Key stage 2.
- Cross-country Club and competition.
- Fundamental skills coaching and gaelic coaching for Key Stage 1
- Swimming for Key Stage 2 pupils

The Way Forward

While we are satisfied that we currently provide our children with the tools for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating habits, we continue to strive to develop innovative ideas in this area:

- We are constantly developing our outside learning environment which includes our school garden where fruit and vegetables are grown for consumption. This promotes a future generation who are more aware of the value and goodness of home grown vegetables.
- At Foundation stage we are developing our outdoor play area where pupils can develop fundamental physical and creative skills whilst engaging in enjoyable health promoting activities. We are investigating the possibility of extending our play facilities to enhance our opportunities for Foundation Stage play.
- We have three teacher trained in Heartstart. We have rolled out the Heartstart programme from P.1 -P.7.
- We are developing our school website and Fronter pages for each class to keep the whole school community informed about healthy living and healthy eating at St. Mary's P.S.
- We are developing our school garden and cookery in the classroom.
- We are very much aware of the impact of stress upon staff in the workplace. It is our aim that all members of our school community work in a healthy environment. As part of the School Development Plan for 2013/14 we will audit and monitor staff well-being. The results of this audit will impact on future planning.

Contacts and Resources

Regional Food in schools Co-ordinator

Judith.Harvey@belb.co.uk

Public Health Agency

www.publichealth.hscni.net

Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland/

www.nidirect.gov.uk/eatwell

Safefood

www.safefood.eu

Action Cancer

www.actioncancer.org

British Heart Foundation

www.bhf.org.uk

British Nutrition Foundation

www.nutrition.org.uk

www.foodfactoflife.org.uk

Dairy Council for Northern Ireland

www.dairycouncil.co.uk

Northern Ireland Water

www.niwater.com

www.bbc.co.uk/schools

www.primaryresources.co.uk

Living Learning Together

Resource for P.1-P.7 providing support with planning, teaching and assessing PDMU within the curriculum. It covers many aspects of healthy living and healthy eating and general wellbeing e.g. food tasting and textures, importance of a healthy balanced diet, growing your own vegetables; an enterprise approach using Story Sack "Enterprise Story", food categories, balanced plate, healthy tuck shops/breaks, whole school promotions and making healthy choices and decisions.

STEM Thematic Units:Farming

A resource produced in collaboration with local farms and companies, includes activities in connection with how food is produced, processed, transported and kept fresh.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The policy and practice will be reviewed annually in light of improvement and changes. Parents will be asked for their views via the annual Pastoral Care questionnaire and the annual evaluation of family Meal Day.

