

**St. Joseph's Primary  
School  
Carnacaville**



**ST. JOSEPH'S**  
CARNACAVILLE

**Healthy Eating  
Policy**

## **Healthy Eating at St Joseph 's**

St Joseph 's P.S, recognises that, in order for pupils to achieve their full potential, there is an important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively. Proper nutrition is essential for good health and effective teaching and learning. The school also recognises the role it can play, as part of the wider community to promote family health. Therefore, as a school we want to help establish and maintain life-long healthy eating and drinking habits.

### **Rationale**

Our school is a healthy eating school. It is important that we consider all elements of our work to ensure that we promote health awareness in all members of the school community. We can provide a valuable role model to pupils and their families with regard to food and healthy eating patterns. In our school we actively support healthy eating and drinking throughout the school day.

Through effective leadership, the school ethos and the curriculum, all school staff can bring together all elements of the school day to create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle.

### **Aims**

- Develop and maintain an ethos within school, where a healthy choice is an easy choice.
- Provide cross-curricular education that enables pupils to make an informed choice.
- Improve the health of pupils, staff and families by helping to influence their eating habits through increased knowledge and awareness of food issues.
- Involve the whole community in developing and maintaining healthy eating and drinking habits.
- Have a pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of children.
- Encourage foods rich in vitamins, minerals, iron, calcium and protein.
- Encourage a balanced diet and exercise.
- Encourage fluid intake.
- To take account of and accommodate dietary requirements.
- Develop healthy eating habits that will last a life time.
- To forge links with outside agencies and sports coaches that promote good health (GAA, Cross country, Basketball, Swimming etc.)

## **Why a healthy eating policy is needed.**

A healthy diet is one of the best ways of maintaining young people's health, both now and in the future. Recent research has shown that diets of some young people are not meeting government recommendations for optimum growth and development.

Immediate benefits from healthy eating include:

- Preventing dental decay, obesity and anaemia
- Improving concentration and behaviour
- Raising achievement

Longer term health benefits include:

- Prevention of coronary disease
- Reduced risk of some cancers
- Prevention of osteoporosis (brittle bones)

## **Aims**

- To promote life-long learning about food, nutrition and eating
- To develop knowledge and understanding of a balanced diet
- To encourage children to enjoy food and make informed choices to enable them to keep healthy
- To understand that good, nutritious food is essential to their ability to learn as well as to their long-term health
- To promote a positive outlook on healthy lifestyles and an awareness of the consequences of healthy and unhealthy choices
- To encourage a healthy lifestyle through association of healthy food with exercise and the promotion of health enhancing habits
- To ensure that we are giving consistent and up to date messages about food and health to the children

## **Objectives**

- To teach accurate factual information about food and nutrition through topics, as part of the curriculum
- To enable the School Kitchen to provide healthy eating menus and food choices
- To promote Healthy Lifestyles each day through positive role models within the school community
- To promote fresh fruit as part of morning break
- To promote the importance of drinking water and allow children access to water bottles in the classrooms
- To promote a healthy balanced menu at lunchtime through school dinners and packed lunches
- To respect and treat individually any specific medical requirements concerning food and nutrition.

## **Partnership with parents and carers**

The partnership of home and school is critical in shaping how children and young people behave, particularly where health is concerned. Each must reinforce the other. Parents and carers will be regularly reminded of our Healthy Eating Policy with regard to packed lunches and snacks. We promote Healthy Eating through 'Healthy Eating' week and through visits from various professionals and outside agencies. Parents are directed to the Food Standards Agency for guidance: [www.eatwell.gov.uk/agesandstages/children/lunchboxsect/](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/agesandstages/children/lunchboxsect/).

Our Healthy Eating Policy is available on our website.

## **Drinks**

- Children can bring their own water bottles into their classrooms and are encouraged to drink water whenever they feel thirsty. They are allowed to refill their water bottles when needed but are encouraged to do this before school, at break-time and at lunch-time
- At dinner time children will be offered water or milk.

## **Breakfast**

- We recognise the importance of eating a balanced breakfast and know that it is hard to concentrate on learning and maintain energy levels without breakfast therefore children are encouraged to eat breakfast before leaving home each morning. Our Breakfast Club provides a variety of cereals and toast for pupils who attend.

## **Break-Time Snack**

We promote and support a Healthy Break and children bring their own snack to school are to bring a healthy snack.

We ask parents to avoid yogurt tubs and tubes as they can be messy and the younger children can struggle to eat them. Crisps, chocolate, cereal bars, energy bars, fruit winders etc. and fizzy drinks are not permitted during snack time. Pupils are asked to bring plain unflavoured water as their drink, and can take a drink as they so wish.

Our aim is to ensure that snacks brought from home provide the pupil with healthy and nutritious food.

Pupils are to bring the snacks outlined below. In summary these are:

- All types of fruit
- Raw vegetables
- Crackers, crispbreads, oatcakes, breadsticks (with cheese or without)
- Plain biscuits

### **Suitable healthy break snacks**

- All **nut based and kiwi** products are **not permitted** to protect pupils with allergies
  - Pieces of fresh fruit, e.g. banana, apple or melon.
  - Fruit pots of sliced or chopped fresh fruit.
  - Salad pots.
  - Vegetable sticks with a low-fat dip.
  - Raw vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots, celery, peppers and cucumber.
  - Bread or pancakes with thinly applied butter or lot fat spread.
  - Scones (plain or wholemeal), dried fruit (not glace cherries) with thinly applied butter or lot fat spread.
  - Plain breadsticks or crackers with a dairy, fruit or vegetable portion.
  - One small sandwich
  - One small wrap.

### **Not permitted as a Break Time Snack**

- Any type of confectionery, e.g. chocolate products and sweets.
- Any type of nuts or nut based products
- Cereal bars.
- Fruit bars.
- Dried fruit that has been sugared or coated in yogurt or chocolate.
- Crisps and crisp-like products such as tortilla chips, potato sticks, corn chips, prawn crackers, puff crackers.
- Pretzels.
- Bombay mix.
- Cakes or buns of any kind.
- Chocolate or sweetened biscuits.
- Pastries: croissants, Danish, tarts etc.
- Chocolate spread.
- Jams, marmalades and honey.

It is, however, recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances, medical, religious or otherwise, which may result in a pupil being exempted from this policy. If unsure, please see your child's class teacher or the school office for further information or advice.

Pupils will continue to be fully informed about this policy through assemblies and class discussions.

## **School Meals**

- Our school works with the Education Authority catering service to ensure that healthy choices are available and that national standards are met
- We encourage children who are entitled to free school meals to avail of the opportunity
- Fruit and vegetables are included as part of the meal and salad is available for the children to help themselves. Where possible, meals have a reduced fat, salt and sugar content
- Medical or other needs relating to allergies will be met in appropriate ways
- The monthly menu is on display in each classroom for children to check and is easily accessible on our website for parents and pupils

## **Packed Lunches**

- Our school aims to support parents in making healthy choices when preparing packed lunches
- To promote this, we have sent out information on healthy choices, and will update this as necessary
- All uneaten food is kept in the lunchbox so parents can keep a check on what their children have eaten
- The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school community, particularly nut allergies. Parents of children who are on special diets for medical reasons or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable and which foods must be avoided. This will involve a meeting with parents and the Catering Manager in school. Careful precautions are put in place to ensure safety.

## **Packed lunches should include:**

- At least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables every day
- Meat, fish or other source of non-dairy protein (e.g. lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas) every day
- Oily fish, such as tuna or salmon, at least once every three weeks
- A starchy food such as any type of bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other types of cereal (aim for wholegrain varieties)
- Dairy food such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, soya products every day
- Water, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, pure fruit juice, smoothies, yoghurt or milk drinks

### **Packed lunches should not include:**

- Snacks such as fruit winders or snacks with a high sugar content.
- Nut chocolate spread, sweets and chewing gum.
- Fizzy or sugary drinks.

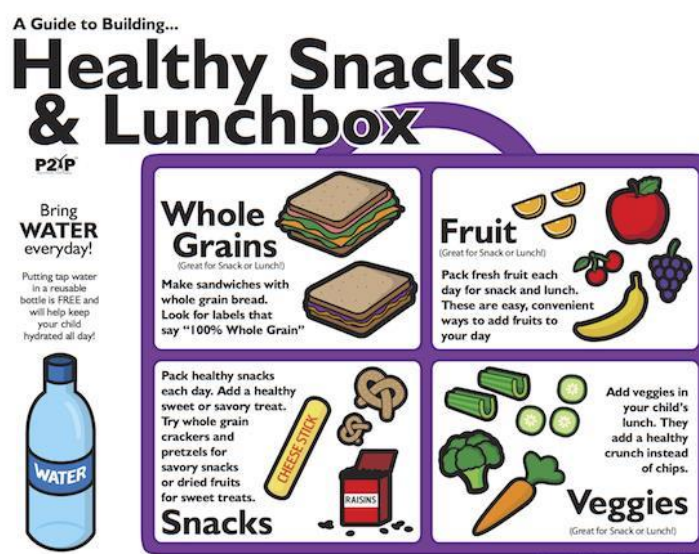
### ***Other snacks on an occasional basis may include:***

- Crisps
- Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits,

The items above are good for a treat and may be more beneficial if given at home.

### **Packed Lunch Containers:**

Pupils and parents are responsible for providing a packed lunch container/lunch box where food items can be stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Parents are asked to use reusable plastic containers rather than disposable plastic bags and bottles. Pupils may bring hot drinks or soup in a flask with a secure lid. All lunch containers should be labelled with the pupil name.



### **Additional information**

#### **Water Provision:**

All children and staff have access to drinking water at all times. Consumption is permitted both in class and during break and lunch times.

Children can bring in a bottle of plain water to school each day. The bottle must have a spill proof cap. Please avoid twist tops due to the increased risk of spillage

#### **Increasing awareness:**

At St Joseph's we promote healthy eating and provide tips to improve packed lunch boxes. We pass on information leaflets to parents from a variety of agencies. This

will help ensure that messages about food and drink are reinforced and supported at home. We work closely with the EA's Catering Services, and continually remind pupils of the benefit of a healthy lifestyle.

### **Allergies:**

Parents and carers should inform the school if a child has been diagnosed with a food allergy, providing information on the foods to which the child reacts and the usual symptoms of the reaction. A meeting must be arranged with the school Catering manager to discuss dietary issues or allergies. If the child will be taking school dinners.

**We are a nut and kiwi free school.** Parents are asked not to include any products that have nuts or Kiwi in them. If appropriate parents will be made aware if some other food allergies present themselves in school. Any health issues with individual pupils will be passed on to the appropriate staff members.

### **School Ethos, Environment and Organisation:**

Pupils take lunch and dinner in the school Hall. We recognise the importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils and the value of promoting social skills through this daily experience. Teachers, catering staff, classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors work together to create a good dining room ambience and the development of appropriate table manners and good eating skills. Pupils will enter and leave the hall in an orderly way and will be encouraged to demonstrate good manners in the hall e.g. using quiet voices and saying 'please' and 'thank you'. Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well.

### **Special occasions and Rewards**

Special occasions, such as Christmas, and the end of term are a time when teachers and pupils like to have a class party or treat. On these occasions party food will be allowed, but the staff will remind the children that this is an 'occasional' treat and not 'every day food'.

### **Food across the Curriculum**

We recognise that food has great potential for cross-curricular work. There are many opportunities to promote healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle in most subjects, and this should be considered when planning topics. Healthy Eating and the exploration of diet and health are covered in Foundation Stage, Keystage 1 and Keystage 2. Through topic work, pupils are encouraged to think about diet, health and personal development. This is supported by visits from health professionals and various outside agencies



## **Food Hygiene**

- Children should be reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating
- Water bottles and lunch boxes should be taken home every day to be washed
- When handling food in lessons, staff and children should have clean hands, hair tied back and a clean surface to work on

## **Physical Exercise:**

Exercise plays an important role in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. It not only brings physical benefits but psychological ones too. Research has shown that it can help combat depression and raise self-esteem. All children are encouraged to actively participate in Physical Education. All classes are timetabled for P.E. When the weather is mild and dry pupils may go outside for P.E. Pupils have opportunities to take part in various sporting activities in school and with outside providers.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Teacher's planning, children's work, discussion, observation, displays, photographs and website linked activities will form the basis of evaluation of pupil learning.