



Healthy School Policy

Policy date: May 2022

Introduction

It is the Board of Governors' policy to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that staff and pupils are provided with safe and healthy conditions; and to encourage a safety culture within the school.

In our school we are committed to providing a safe environment and giving all our pupils consistent messages about all aspects of health to help them understand the impact of particular behaviours and encourage them to take responsibility for the choices they make.

The school supports the Public Health Agency's 'Healthy Breaks in Schools' campaign so as to encourage children to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, which has been shown to reduce the onset of certain life-threatening conditions as well as being helpful in tackling and preventing childhood obesity. We also carry out a 'Water Bottles on Desk' scheme to encourage children to drink water as proper hydration supports concentration and learning.

We have carried out a Healthy School Audit and have a range of Pastoral Care Policies to support this area of our work (e.g. Road Safety, Firework Safety, Care in the Sun, PDMU, Relationships and Sexuality Education, PE, Smoking Policy etc.)

Rationale

Milltown Primary School is a healthy school and endeavours, through all elements of its work, to promote health and safety awareness in all members of the school community. We can provide valuable support to pupils and their families with regard to food and healthy eating patterns and encouraging activities leading to healthy lifestyles.

Through effective leadership, the school ethos and the curriculum, all school staff can create an environment which supports a healthy lifestyle.

In recent times the health of children has become a major concern. At Milltown Primary School we are committed, as a Healthy School, to promoting good health to support successful learning. We implement a Healthy Schools programme in line with the following Government guidelines:

- NI Curriculum requirements
- Every School a Good School, A Policy for School Improvement, (April 2009)
- School Food the Essential Guide (Top Marks) (Health Promotion Agency 2009)
- Healthy Breaks in Schools, Public Health Agency
- DE Circular 2013/21 Healthy Food for Healthy Outcomes, Food in Schools Policy

Aims and Objectives

- To promote health awareness
- To give pupils the information they need to make healthy choices
- To contribute to the healthy physical and mental development of all members of our school community
- To ensure that we are giving consistent messages about food and health
- To encourage all children to take part in the `Healthy Breaks in School` campaign
- To ensure that the school provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment where pupils can reach their potential.
- To contribute to mental health through actively promoting self-esteem and self-confidence in developing the skills to make choices and take responsibility for all health-related issues.
- To develop throughout the school healthy relationships, respect and consideration for others.
- To co-ordinate, implement and review a range of health-related policies for staff and pupils.
- To facilitate a cross-curricular approach to the promotion of health and wellbeing.
- To provide a wide range of activities which promote a healthy lifestyle.
- To liaise with parents/guardians and the wider community on a range of health-related initiatives.
- To effectively utilise a range of appropriate specialist external agencies in the promotion of health and wellbeing.

TAUGHT CURRICULUM

We acknowledge and promote the significant contribution of various subject areas in developing Healthy Lifestyle practices.

In Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2, there are a number of opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge and understanding of health, including healthy eating patterns and practical skills that are needed to understand where food comes from such as shopping, preparing and cooking food.

Literacy provides children with the opportunity to explore procedures, poetry, persuasion, argument and narrative work using food and food related issues as a stimulus, e.g. writing recipes or letters to a company to persuade them to use fair trade / local goods etc.

Numeracy can offer the possibility of understanding nutrition labelling, calculating quantities for recipes, weighing and measuring ingredients.

The World Around Us provides the opportunity to learn about the types of food available, their nutritional composition, digestion and the function of different nutrients in contributing to health and how the body responds to exercise.

Topic work e.g. 'Farming' provides the opportunity to learn about where food comes from and to apply healthy eating messages through practical work with food, including preparation and cooking and to link with local initiatives such as Tesco's Fair Trade food programme.

This also provides a focus on the natural world and changing environment, offering the chance to consider the impact our consumer choices have on people across the world that rely on growing food as their source of income. History provides insight into changes in diet and food over time.

RE provides the opportunity to consider different foods associated with religious festivals.

ICT can afford pupils the opportunity to research food issues using the internet and other electronic resources. Pupils design packaging and adverts to promote healthy food choices.

PDMU encourages young people to take responsibility for their own health and well-being, teaches them how to develop a healthy lifestyle and addresses issues such as body image. Pupils are able to discuss issues of interest to young people, e.g. advertising and sustainable development.

Music can provide pupils with knowledge about different properties of cooked and uncooked foods where pulses and grains are used in unpitched percussion instruments.

Physical Education provides pupils with the opportunity to develop physically and to understand the practical impact of sport, exercise and other physical activity such as dance and walking.

FOOD WITHIN THE SCHOOL

Break

Milk, at a subsidised rate, is available and all children are encouraged to take advantage of this. As part of the Healthy Breaks in School scheme, children are encouraged to only bring fruit, vegetables or a plain bread-based snack for break time and to drink milk or water.

School meals and packed lunches

It is our intention that all pupils will have a positive lunchtime experience and make our mealtimes a social occasion. Lunchtime arrangements are monitored to ensure fairness in pupil service e.g. through table rotation / support for younger children etc. Supervisors are guided in using friendly supervision techniques.

School meals are provided by the EA and prepared, and transported from, a central kitchen in Banbridge. Lunch menus are circulated electronically on a monthly basis to encourage children to consider this option. Children taking school meals can choose what they would like to eat each day. When necessary, feedback is given to parents on their children's school meals food consumption.

Many children bring packed lunch to school. We encourage parents to provide nutritionally well-balanced packed lunches that are high in protein, fibre and water and low in fat, sugar and salt. Glass bottles and fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Medical Needs / Religious Observance

The school meals service will cater for pupils who have special medical conditions or particular religious beliefs regarding food. The school secretary communicates this information to the central kitchen.

Allergies

Staff, parents and children are informed about allergies that could have serious medical consequences, such as a nut allergy, and asked not to send such foods in to school. Venues for educational visits are also informed.

Cultural Diversity

As a school we appreciate the growing diversity of culture within our community. From time to time, in conjunction with School Meals personnel, we have special meals to focus on other cultures e.g. 'Italian Day'.

'Water Bottles on Desk' scheme

Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the school day. Clear water bottles may be kept on the children's desk and the children may drink their water at any time.

Rewards

The occasional use of sweets as a reward is acceptable at the teacher's discretion

Celebrations

Children are permitted to bring in, and share, birthday cakes/cupcakes.

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. This is not always easy but our school is well placed to lead by example.

We ask parents not to send in fizzy drinks and we remind them that only unflavoured, still water may be drunk during the school day, except at lunch when children may bring other drinks with packed lunches.

Parents are consulted regarding the Healthy Breaks Policy and are regularly updated through our newsletter, text messaging service and school website.

The governors, and principal will consider carefully any request for an exception to be made for any individual pupil on the grounds of special educational needs or a medical condition.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Governors monitor and check that the school policy is upheld and can also offer guidance where a member of the body has particular expertise in this area.
- EA is responsible for ensuring the quality of the food offered through school meals.
- The EA Catering Manager is responsible for ensuring that the food served is in accordance with the Department of Education's Nutritional Standards policy.
- Teachers are responsible for the curriculum development of the Healthy School Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for supporting colleagues in the delivery of the Healthy School Policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as is needed to take account of new developments.