

## **Health and Nutrition Policy**

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The Science curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops.

### **Aims of this policy:**

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a bottle of water (or more on days of activity/sunshine).

### **The Healthy Lunch Guidelines**

Children in each class were asked to discuss what they thought should be in a healthy lunch. From these discussions the following guidelines emerged.

#### What is a healthy lunch?

- It is full of goodness like protein, vitamins and calcium.
- Contains food/drinks with no or reduced sugar, because too much sugar is bad for your teeth.
- Contains no colouring or additives.

#### Benefits of a healthy lunch

- Gives children strength and energy
  - Makes children fit and healthy
  - Helps children's brain power

#### What could be in a healthy lunch?

- Sandwiches or rolls with cheese, meat, fish eg tuna or salmon or other fillings.
- Fruit (peeled and chopped for small children)
- Vegetables (washed and chopped)• Hummus
- Pasta or rice
- Pitta bread or wraps
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese
- Plain rice cakes/corn cakes (not chocolate/yoghurt flavoured)
- Plain popcorn
- Salad
- Sugar-free jelly pots or fruit jelly
- Wholemeal or plain scones
- Yoghurt (easy to open)

#### What should **not** be in a healthy lunch?

- Cereal bars

- Crisps
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies
- Chewing gum
- Cake, biscuits, pastries, buns, doughnuts or traybakes (even homemade)
- Chocolate spread
- Fizzy drinks
- Flavoured milk
- Fruit winders
- **Nuts including nut butters** (due to allergies)
- Protein bars

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?

- Water
- Diluted drinks
- Milk
- Smoothies (limited)

What drinks should **not** be allowed?

- Fizzy drinks
- Sugary drinks
- Fruit juice

Who should make sure everyone follows the rules?

- Our parents, because they make our lunch and should set a good example. They are responsible for our health
- We should, because it's our health and we want to be fit and full of energy
- Teachers, because they can see what's in our lunch boxes and know who's eating the right foods every day
- The Principal

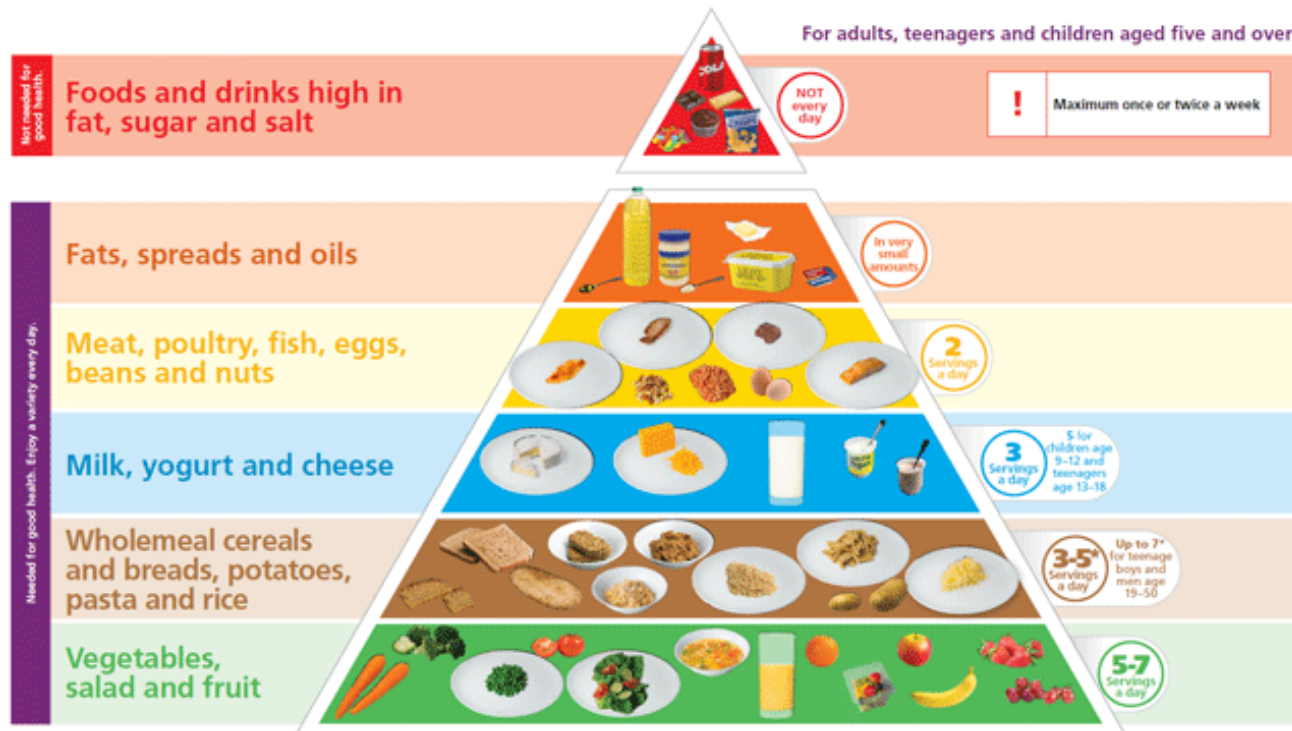
What should we do when children bring in foods not allowed?

The children bring the food/drink home in their lunch box.

Should we make exceptions for special occasions?

- Yes, for treats after Communion or Confirmation
- Yes, for end of term parties
- No, for school trips (in case we get sick on the bus)
- No, we cannot have children's birthday parties in school

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:



### We are a **Green Flag School**

We have earned five Green Flags. With this in mind, children are asked to:

- Take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver foil, wrappings, containers and cartons
- Put only fruit and vegetable peelings into the compost bins
- Not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

The children of St. Joseph's are very keen to have healthy lunches and show a good understanding of what that means. We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices.

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management and Parents' Association in May 2018. It will be reviewed in 2020.