

Healthy Eating Policy



Mission Statement and Ethos

The mission statement of St Mary's School states that 'we aim to provide our students with an education for life, recognising and fostering, in a caring environment, the unique dignity and value of each'.

What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing long term health of students and staff. The school day provides the opportunity for having at least one of the daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The curriculum provides an opportunity to learn and explore about food and healthy lifestyles. Through these guidelines St Mary's DS aims to help all those involved in our school community, e.g. Students, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

1. Students, with the support of Parents, should ensure that they have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school or alternatively breakfast can be purchased in the school canteen.
2. A healthy Lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid. Processed meat should only be offered once a week. Chicken, turkey, tuna and salmon are good low-fat options. High sugar content food should not be offered as a filling e.g Jam, marmalade, honey.
3. Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage include fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (non-dessert), plain rice cakes, crackers and small scone (plain, fruit or wholemeal).
4. All students are encouraged to drink either plain milk or tap/still water. Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9 – 18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage. Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school. If students do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. 2 litres of water is the daily recommended allowance.
5. Fizzy drinks, Sports /energy drinks and Juice drinks are not recommended due to their very high sugar content and poor nutritional value. We strongly discourage their consumption in school.
6. Foods that have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment in association with our Green Schools policy.

7. The School canteen will provide healthy food and drink choices in line with healthy eating guidelines and food Hygiene regulations
8. Hot food purchased from outlets are not permitted on the premises due to their usually high fat and salt content.
9. We urge students who buy their lunch to make healthy food choices and purchase from the school canteen which is following the Healthy food policy.
10. The dining area in the school will be clean and comfortable. The school will ensure that adequate facilities for litter disposal are in place. It is the responsibility of each member of the school community to pick up their own litter and dispose of it correctly.
11. Food and drink can only be consumed in the canteen area, or in the school yard....not in the school halls or classrooms or library.
12. School related events/fundraisers will adhere to the School's healthy eating policy and will have a healthy focus.
13. Nutrition & Healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.
14. Teachers and staff will endeavour to provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including provision of non- food related rewards.
15. 'Healthy Eating Awareness' Events will be held annually as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
16. The 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' were ratified by the board of management on the 8th of March 2016 and will be reviewed every two years. The policy will be displayed in the Assembly area, School journal and around the school.