**Healthy Eating Policy**

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at *Presentation Convent NS Castlecomer*we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school and following the publication of Circular 13/2016 which focuses on the importance of physical activity and healthy eating, staff parents and the Board of Management reviewed our healthy eating policy at a staff meetings on the 3/2/2016, at a Parents’ Council on the 9th of March 2016 and at a Board of Management meeting on 14/4/2016.

**Aims**

* 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.

**Objectives**

* 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).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend while recognising that some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. Therefore, we ask that you encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children

**Bread & Alternatives                            Savouries**

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal                     Lean Meat  
Rice – wholegrain                                                 Chicken/Turkey  
Pasta – wholegrain                                               Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines      
Potato Salad                                                        Cheese  
Wholemeal Scones                                               Quiche  
Bread sticks                                                         Pizza  
Crackers  
Pitta bread

**Fruit & Vegetables                               Drinks**

Apples, Banana, Peach                                                    Milk                                
Mandarins, Orange segments,                                          Water  
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,                   
Plum, Pineapple cubes                                                        
Grapes,  
Cucumber, Sweetcorn  
Tomato, Coleslaw.

**A word about Milk**

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding.  This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth.  If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

**We ask that children do not bring the following to school:**

**Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:**

**Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)**

* Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
* Sweets
* Chocolate biscuits/bars
* Cereal bars
* Chewing gum
* Fruit winders
* Heavily processed food i.e. lunchables
* Chocolate covered rice cakes etc.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

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

                                   Fats

**Sugar                                             Sparingly**

                             Sweets etc.

                              Meat, Fish                                      2 portions per day  
Peas/Beans                                                                                                      
  
Milk, Cheese                                    3+ portions per day

**Yoghurt**

                             Fruit & Vegetables                                 4+ portions per day        
  
Bread, Cereals & Potatoes                                    6+ portions per day

**Treats**  
As part of a range of positive rewards, teachers will occasionally give a small sweet treat e.g. a jelly to children. On special occasions e.g. end of year, Christmas, Hallowe’en class parties will be held as a celebration and reward for effort and hard work.  
**Green Flag School**  
Our green code states:

* We use lunchboxes and reusable bottles to eliminate litter
* We bring extra rubbish home
* We shred and collect paper for recycling
* We plant and take care of shrubs and plants in our school
* We will save: energy, money, the environment, our health
* Wasting water is not cool, saving water is the rule
* Be a global citizen,  show you care

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

* take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food
* use reusable containers and bottles for food and drinks
* put only fruit peel or vegetable skins into the compost bins
* not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

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

This policy was drafted by teachers at a staff meeting on 3/3/2016 and presented to the Parents’ Council at a meeting on 9/3/2016

It was finally ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on 14/4/2016

 It will be reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Signed: Pat Parle, Chairperson