Lucan Educate Together National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale

In Lucan Educate Together, we strive to promote healthy eating amongst the pupils in our everyday teachings. Our school children are helped to appreciate the need to care for the body in order to keep it healthy and strong.

Our SPHE & Science programmes endorse these views:

- **SPHE Strand Unit:**
  - Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class
  - Making choices (See Teacher Guidelines pp 11-13)
- **Science Strand Living Things:** Strand Unit: Myself:
  - Human Life Processes (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class) (See Teacher Guidelines p.10-11)

In accordance with our aim to help the pupils to develop to the best of their ability, we see ourselves as having a role in the process of enabling pupils to increase control over and improve their health.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our health and safety policy and with the school information and ethos booklet.

Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

- Promote nutrition awareness
- Positively affect healthy eating among school–age children
- Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food

- Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which are hoped will become lifelong habits
- Provide members of staff, parents and those involved in school activities with clear information
- Protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.

Content

1. Healthy lunch

We aspire to help each child take some responsibility for his/her health by encouraging positive choices in relation to diet. To support our healthy eating policy we ask that parents/ guardians provide children with a healthy lunch each day. An example of a healthy lunch is as follows:

- Snack time: a piece of fruit and a drink
- Lunchtime: a sandwich, a yoghurt, a piece of fruit, a drink

We would encourage all children to bring a bottle of water with them to school.

Healthy eating during the school day promotes good concentration and alertness. Treats and drinks which have high sugar levels affect concentration and can cause surges and dips of energy.

As a reward system for eating healthily throughout the week, we view Friday as a "treat day" when children in addition to the above, bring a small treat in their lunchbox.

As a general principle our teaching staff do not reward good behaviour and work in the classroom with treats. As well as praise and encouragement examples of rewards given include stickers, picking a small toy out of a "goodie bag" and personal certificates. At times, our teachers will reward children with a small treat/sweet on a Friday and we ask that parents/guardians let staff know if they do not want their child to be given treats.

2. Prohibited foods

Because of the risk of severe reactions to allergies, we ask that no nuts or nut containing foods be brought into the school.

We also request that children do not bring fizzy drinks to school.

Chewing gum is prohibited as well.

3. Lunch time guidelines

In order to promote the healthy eating and safety of all children in the school and prevent the spread of infection, guidelines for eating at lunch and break times are necessary.

- Children are not to share food or drink. However in the case where a child forgets their lunch, other children in the class may share.
- Children are not to share food utensils or drinks containers.

We would also encourage that:

- All containers are labelled with the child's name
- As far as practicable lunches are to be eaten while the children are in their seats.

4. It is important to note that the health and safety of children with serious allergies will take precedence over other issues. It will be necessary to introduce additional precautions or restrictions in classes in which some children have serious allergies. In these cases a note will be sent home by the class teacher specifying the allergen(s) and requesting that the children do not bring these foods to school.

5. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school and the class teacher if their child has an allergy to a specific food. The class teacher and parents will meet to complete a Notification of Medical Condition/Healthcare Plan. The whole school staff will be informed of the child, their allergy and the appropriate medical treatment should the child have an allergic reaction. If the child requires treatment with an Epi pen in case of an allergic reaction, two must be provided to the school by the parents. Members of staff are trained in the administration of an Epi pen.

<u>Success criteria</u>

We will know that the policy is effective when healthy eating has become a habit for pupils. Children observed around the school will be eating only healthy lunches (except on Fridays).

Ratified by BOM 2014/2015

Timeframe for review

This plan will be reviewed in 2018