St Bernadette’s Catholic Primary School

Healthy Eating and Lifestyle Policy

February 2020

Approved by the Governing Board March 2020

Rationale

The rise in childhood obesity and illnesses such as the early onset of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease has highlighted the dangers of unhealthy lifestyles. We at St. Bernadette's believe schools have an important role to play in encouraging children to make healthy life choices. Educating children on the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise can bring about both immediate and long-term improvements to their quality of life.

A healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting children's health; for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development. Our aim is to help them establish a healthy lifestyle that, we hope, will continue into adulthood.

Proper nutrition is essential for good health and effective learning. The benefits of Healthy Eating include:

- Helping young people develop, grow and do well in school
- Preventing childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, tooth decay and anaemia
- Possibly helping prevent health problems later in life, including heart disease and cancer
- Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating patterns in adulthood can be difficult
- Supporting a child's social developing through sitting down to a meal with other children

Consequences of Unhealthy Eating include:

- Hungry children are more likely to have behavioural, emotional and academic problems at school
- Research suggests that not having breakfast can affect children's intellectual performance
- Poor eating habits and inactivity are the root cause of overweight and obesity. The percentage of young people who are overweight has almost doubled in the last twenty years
- Eating disorders are extremely common among young people
- 76% of teachers believe overweight school children are bullied more than any other group.

Aim and Objectives

We aim to:

- Provide a consistent programme of cross-curricular nutrition education that enables pupils to make informed choices without guilt or anxiety.
- Provide a 'whole school' approach to nutrition.
- Work in partnership with catering staff to ensure that nutritional standards are implemented by providing attractive, value for money meals that are appropriate for our children.
- Work in partnership to achieve a pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of each pupil.

Nutritional aims:

- To encourage pupils to choose a variety of foods to ensure a balanced intake in line with the National nutrition guide and nutrition standards.
- Encourage foods which are rich in vitamins, iron and calcium,
- Encourage starchy foods as a source of energy.
- Encourage the consumption of milk and water.
- Discourage sugary drinks and unhealthy snacks between meals.

Water

Research indicates that school children do not drink enough water during the school day and that this affects their concentration and behaviour.

The school recognises that children concentrate better, are healthier and more comfortable if they are not dehydrated, and the best way of ensuring adequate fluid intake is to provide access to water as needed.

All children are encouraged to bring a labelled bottle of water to school each day. This is kept in an accessible place according to the rules of each particular class.

School Break

Subsidised milk, if available or water should be drunk during the day. Fizzy drinks are not allowed to be consumed in school and fruit drinks etc are only permitted to be taken at lunchtime. These drinks are not allowed during break times or at any other time of the school day.

Children from Nursery (Acorns) to Year 2 are supplied with a healthy snack at break. For pupils in Year 3 – Year 6, parents are asked to supply their child with fresh or dried fruit or vegetable portions. Other snacks such as crisps, snackbars, cereal bars, crackers, pancakes etc. **will not** be allowed to be consumed at breaktime. Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration. Please do not supply any nut based snack or product, due to the serious nature of nut allergies, **St Bernadette's is a Nut Free School.**

It is impossible for staff to check every child's snack. We rely on our parents to support the school in promoting health and wellbeing by sending an appropriate snack following the above guidelines.

Packed Lunches

Packed lunches should include some fruit or vegetables e.g. a piece of fruit, dried fruit, cherry tomato, raw carrot, cucumber wedge. Sugary drinks and chocolate snacks should be avoided and fruit juice or diluted squash should be consumed at lunchtimes only. All uneaten food is kept in the lunch box so parents can keep a check on what their children have eaten.

Sweets, chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not allowed in school.

Teachers may provide the children with a sweet/chocolate bar on occasions such as class parties.

School meals

For many children, the lunchtime meal is the main meal of the day. It is important that meals served are nutritionally balanced. Under-nutrition, even in its milder forms, can have detrimental effects on cognitive development, behaviour, concentration and school performance.

The subtle message that pupils receive about food and health from the daily life of school are as important as those given during lessons, e.g. school menus, peer pressure to eat certain snacks in packed lunches. By working together, we can promote healthier eating habits.

Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration.

School Ethos, Environment and Organisation

School meals and packed lunches are eaten in the dining hall with tables and chairs being set out by the lunchtime supervisors. Lunchtimes and lunch breaks are staggered across the school to allow all pupils to eat with their peers in a calm yet social environment.

Lunchtime supervisors encourage good manners and adherence to the school's lunchtime rules –

- We use our manners
- We clean up after ourselves
- We stay in our seats whilst eating
- We use quiet voices to speak to others
- We use cutlery to eat our hot food

House point tokens are awarded as positive reinforcement. Lunchtime supervisors support pupils and encourage good eating habits. Notably healthy lunchboxes are rewarded with stickers.

The school recognises:

- The importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils.
- The value of promoting social skills.

Teachers, caterers and lunchtime supervisors work together to promote a positive dining ambience and the development of appropriate table manners in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Healthy eating and the exploration of diet and health are covered through the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in the Curriculum. Through Our World topic work, science, PSHE and RSE lessons, children are encouraged to think about diet, health and personal development. This is supported by visits from local dentists, visits from school nurses, Healthy Community Week, participation in the Daily Mile, PE lessons, Children's Mental Health Week and the active encouragement to participate in a range of sporting and physical extra curricular activities.

Exercise plays an important role in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. It not only brings physical benefits but psychological ones too. Research has shown that it can help combat depression and raise self-esteem.

Some classes in school now participate in the Daily Mile initiative, whereby children from each class walk, jog or run with their classmates in the safety of the playground. This helps children improve their physical, emotional and social health and well-being by doing at least 15 minutes of physical activity each day.