



## Healthy Eating Guidelines

### **Introductory Statement:**

In All Saints' N.S. parents, as partners of the teaching staff are encouraged to educate their children to eat healthily. We approach this with the understanding that ultimately children's appetites and tastes differ and it is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that his/her child eats healthily at all times, including during school activities. As a primary school, following the Department of Education and Skills prescribed curriculum, we are aware of our responsibility to encourage the children to implement the good practice that they have been taught across the curriculum in relation to healthy eating. To this end, we have developed this Healthy Eating Guidelines for Parents and Guardians.

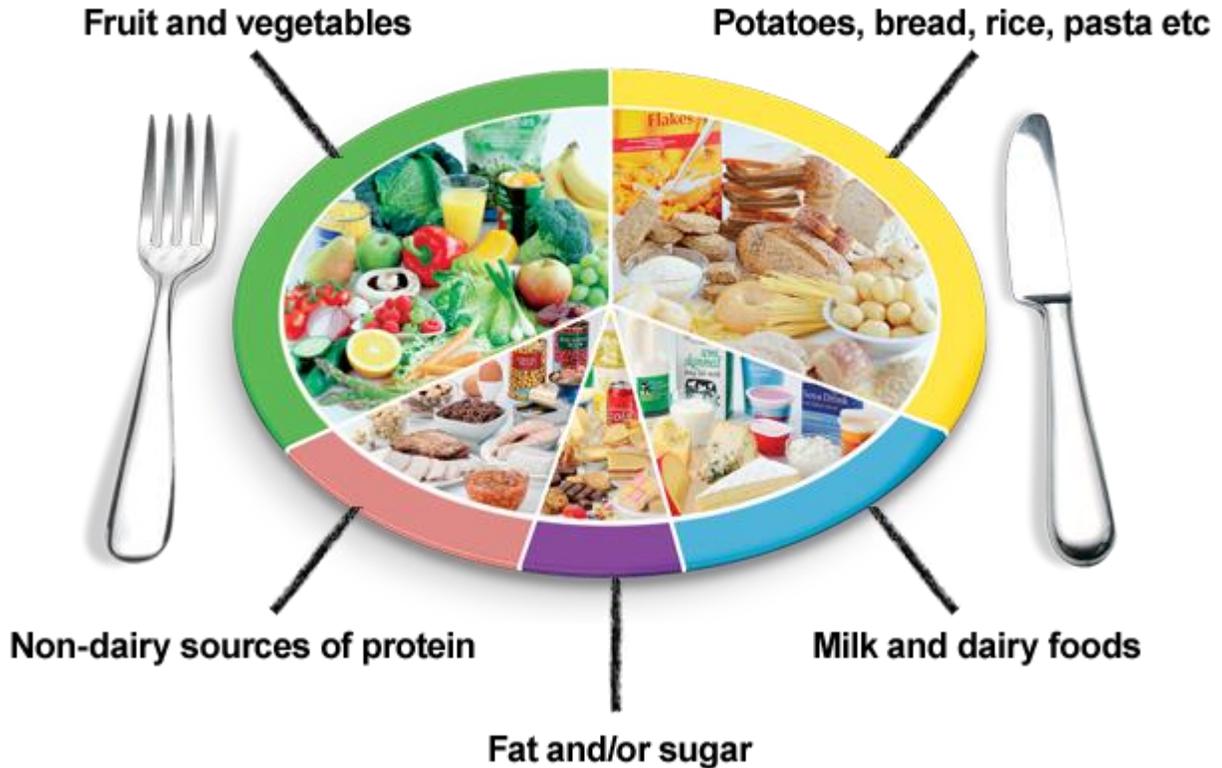
Studies have shown that children who eat a well-balanced breakfast before school and lunch often do better in school and are more alert. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) curriculum, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the Physical Education curriculum 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. The Geography curriculum educates children about where their food is sourced/grown

### **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.
- ✓ 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.

All children are encouraged to eat balanced and proportionate meals at all times, including those meals eaten while in school. The "eat well plate" outlines an excellent common sense approach to healthy and balanced eating.

# The eatwell plate



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). All teachers will encourage the children to eat their lunch however, teachers cannot monitor each child's lunchbox closely. If your child is returning home with uneaten food, you should chat to them and encourage them to eat their lunch in the time provided. You may need to review the amount of lunch given, what food your child is given (children's tastes can change rapidly as they grow), and if your child can manage their food independently. Some children may be assisted by lessening the preparation or packaging involved with their lunch e.g. start to peel an orange, think about how much packaging is actually required in the lunchbox. All children will be given time to eat their lunch at their desks inside the classroom. Children should stay seated while eating their lunch and may not walk around the classroom. Children may take a small amount of lunch outdoors to eat. Younger children may be allowed some extra time to eat indoors before going out to play. Children are taught that treat items on a Friday should always be eaten last, at Lunch Break, once all other food has been eaten. **Children should not exchange food in school or save food to be eaten on the way home after school.**

**We should already be aware of any allergies, food or otherwise that your child has but please inform us if there are any changes in this regard.**

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We would encourage parents/guardians to try and reduce the amount of packaging in their child's lunchbox. We would greatly appreciate your co-operation with this matter. Reusable containers and flasks are encouraged and are also more economical. All containers and flasks should be named.

### **Drinks**

To ensure good concentration, it is important for children to drink lots of water. Children should always have a bottle of water available to them. Parents should be aware that not all drinks promoted as drinks suitable for lunchboxes are healthy and balanced. In fact, many fruit drinks are high in sugar. **Fizzy drinks are never allowed as part of a school lunchbox, even on a Friday.**

### **Lunches**

☺ *What should be in a healthy lunch?* Yogurts, sandwiches, salad, fruit (peeled and sliced), vegetables (chopped up and ready to eat)

☹ *What should not be in a healthy lunch?* Crisps, chocolate bars, jellies, lollipops, fizzy drinks, marshmallows, chocolate spread

☺ *What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?* Water, milk, watered down fresh fruit juice.

### **Treats on a Friday**

While we would encourage lunchboxes that contain healthy food all week long, **one small treat** will be allowed on a Friday. It is up to each parent to decide what may constitute a 'treat' for their child. This treat does not necessarily need to be chocolate or crisps, it may be a special fruit treat or other healthy treat e.g. Mango and raspberries. We emphasise that lunch should be balanced on Friday too. **No lollipops allowed.**

The following foods **will not be allowed in lunchboxes Monday to Thursday**: Sweets, crisps, chocolate, cereal bars, buns, cakes, bars, biscuits. Fizzy drinks, hot chocolate, milkshakes, lucozade or similar. If we discover any of the above in your child's box we will ask them to eat the rest of their lunch and bring unhealthy foods home.

### **Dissemination:**

All new parents/guardians will be given a copy of this Healthy Eating Policy. A copy of these Healthy Eating guidelines will also be placed on the school website. Teachers will observe lunches brought to school and encourage pupils to bring healthy food in their lunchboxes. Reminders will be sent home to parents if necessary

### **Conclusion:**

The teaching staff at All Saints' National School greatly appreciates the support of parents in our efforts to implement these Healthy Eating Guidelines. The focus should be a positive one, with an emphasis on the benefits of eating healthily and setting up good habits early in a child's formative years.

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