

# Castaheany Educate Together Healthy Eating Policy

## Introductory statement:

This policy was formulated by a sub-committee of the staff of Castaheany Educate Together School, following a review of the Healthy Eating Policy. It has arisen after a process of staff consultation.

## The Rationale:

Good nutrition is critical for every child's short and long term health and development. Healthy eating habits are learned during childhood and can help reduce the risk of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, anaemia and bad dental health throughout their life. As a school, we believe a healthy eating policy is fundamental, not only to add life to years but also to add years to life. Our policy is a statement which outlines our school's commitment to promote healthy eating. It reflects the specific needs of our school community and promotes the importance of good nutrition practices. We focused on this policy to support parents/guardians and pupils around developing healthy eating habits at an early age.

## Aims:

The aims of this policy are:

1. to promote nutritional awareness and provide consistent messages about nutrition through classroom education.
2. to provide members of staff, parents/guardians and pupils with clear information on healthy eating.
3. to support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which we hope will become lifelong.
4. to promote the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.
5. to support the school's environmental policy e.g. re-usable containers and minimising wrappers.
6. to help improve children's concentration, learning and energy levels.
7. to support parents/guardians and children in making healthy and enjoyable decisions around food by providing nutritional information (*see healthy lunches booklet*).

## Curriculum Links:

- **S.P.H.E:** Taking care of my body : Food and Nutrition
- **Science:** Myself : Human Life Processes
- **P.E:** Promoting a healthy, active lifestyle

## Guidelines:

1. Parents are asked, when choosing lunches, not to include the follow items as they are banned in our school:

popcorn  
crisps/plantain  
sweets/lollipops  
chocolate bars  
biscuits  
cakes/buns/pastries  
fizzy drinks/energy drinks  
chewing gum  
hot liquids\*\*

*\*\*Pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class may bring warm liquids, soups etc to school in a flask.*

2. Please note lollipops, chewing gum and hot liquids are not allowed for safety reasons.
3. The school has two lunch breaks, one at 10am and one at 12 noon. Please ensure your child has enough nourishing food and drinks for both breaks. To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g. fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut).
4. Children are requested to take home all uneaten food so that parents/guardians know if the quantity they are sending is too large or if the child does not like a particular food. Uneaten food may not be thrown in the bin.
5. Friday is no longer our designated treat day. On this day children are not allowed to bring treats to school.
6. If treats are brought in on any day, the children will be asked to take it home.
7. We cannot host birthday parties at school. If parents/guardians wish, children should celebrate their birthdays at home with their families. Please refrain from sending in big "goodie bags" of sugary, expensive sweets to school. We will, of course, sing 'Happy Birthday' for your child on the big day, if they would like us to, and generally make a fuss of them!
8. We pride ourselves on being a Green Flag School. In keeping with this and with the aim of reducing waste, please remove all packaging from food whenever you can. Instead, we encourage the use of re-usable containers, flasks, beakers etc. Glass bottles and cans are not allowed.
9. The opportunity to attend a Healthy Eating Course/Information Evening will be offered to all parents.
10. Sweets **will not** be used as rewards at school.

**Exceptions:**

During the school year, treats will be organised by school staff from time to time, on special occasions e.g. cinema days, school trips, baking days etc. On these days, all pupils will receive the same treats, thus eliminating the opportunity for comparing treats and any teasing or unkind words. Careful attention will be given to any dietary requirements, food allergies or religious observances when selecting treats for the pupils. We thank the members of the Student Council for their very valuable and insightful feedback in relation to these matters.

**Contents:**

A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of food shelves from the food pyramid. These are indicated below:



### **Food Allergies:**

If a child has a serious food allergy or special dietary requirement, parents and guardians are responsible for notifying the school, providing the implications of the allergy and listing the foods to be avoided.

### **School Support:**

Our Home-School Liaison programme will continue to support parents and families in the areas of healthy lunches, healthy food and cooking and other related issues with continued home visits, courses for parents and any other support that is needed. Our strong pastoral care ethic and the Educate Together key principal of Child-Centredness will ensure that no child goes hungry at our school.

All relevant curricular lessons which support this Healthy Eating Policy will be taught at all class levels (see 'Curriculum Links' section above)

### **Time Frame for Implementation:**

This policy will be implemented from 16<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

### **Time Frame for Review:**

This policy will be reviewed in two years' time.

### **Ratification and Communication:**

A draft copy of the policy was sent to all families in April 2011, for feedback and suggestions. It was also brought to the PTA committee, Student Council and discussed at two staff meetings.

The Board of Management ratified the final draft on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Schools are an ideal setting to promote good nutrition as they have been shown to have a positive impact on eating behaviours of young people", (World Health Organisation 1998).*