



## **MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School we recognise the connection between a healthy diet and children's ability to concentrate and learn. We are dedicated to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards all aspects of health, particularly a healthy diet, thus enabling pupils to make informed food choices.

We are committed to providing an environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle. We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be positive role models and support children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

This will be achieved by the whole school approach documented in this policy. The policy was formulated through consultation between members of staff, governors, parents, pupils and health professionals.

#### **AIMS**

- To encourage children to make healthy food choices and be better prepared to learn and achieve
- To ensure that food consumed in the school acknowledges the ethical, medical & dietary requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian/vegan, medical and allergenic needs
- To provide opportunities for members of our school community to share food as a way to build mixed age group friendships and to celebrate cultural diversity
- To ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers

## **CURRICULUM**

Education about healthy eating and the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle is taught explicitly across the whole school through our thematic approach. All the children at Mallusk Integrated Primary School have the opportunity to learn about where our food comes from and how we might choose to make ethical or environmental choices when growing or purchasing food. Opportunities for learning outside the classroom and use of school grounds, school garden and poly tunnel help to support this. The children also develop skills and experience in preparing food safely as well as cooking a range of snacks and meals. Immersing children in activities with food from a young age not only broadens their willingness to try new foods but also helps provide a foundation of skill and knowledge from which they can make wise food choices, for life.

Themes which include emphasis on healthy diet and lifestyle choices, ethical food production and hygienic food preparation include:

Theme	Teaching & learning opportunities
<b><i>Time to rhyme</i></b>	Learning about growing fruit and vegetables; what you can and cannot eat in the garden.
<b><i>Let's go camping</i></b>	Safety when cooking outdoors; healthy snacks to take on a picnic.
<b><i>Look at me, look at you</i></b>	How healthy food and exercise are important to your body; how to pack a healthy lunchbox.
<b><i>Mighty Me</i></b>	Healthy lifestyle choices
<b><i>Food and celebrations</i></b>	Healthy choices, hygienic food preparation; the role of food in cultural celebrations; trying new foods
<b><i>Blue Planet</i></b>	Ethically sourced food
<b><i>Hunger</i></b>	Nutrition
<b><i>Impact</i></b>	Fair trade; ethical food sourcing
<b><i>Are you wise</i></b>	Making healthy lifestyle choices

Through our bespoke R.E. scheme of work, the children also have regular opportunities to learn about food in cultural celebrations such as Eid, Shrove Tuesday, Easter etc. This provides opportunities to try different foods and cook and share meals or snacks together.

## **BREAK**

The school understands that healthy snacks are an important part of the diet of young people. On joining the school, parents are advised about healthy choices for snacks and packed lunches. Children are encouraged to have fruit/ vegetables in their morning snack. Biscuits, crisps etc. are not permitted.

## **SCHOOL MEALS**

The school meals are prepared locally and are delivered to and served in the school. The meals comply fully with the [Nutritional Standards](#) for School Lunches and the Nutritional Standards for Other Food and Drinks in Schools. Meals are freshly cooked each day using seasonal ingredients offering healthy varied menus, including familiar favourites as well as tempting new tastes to try. The benefits of a school meal are:

- A freshly prepared nutritious meal
- Value for money
- Convenience
- A social opportunity to eat with others
- The ability to cater for special dietary requirements
- Availability of vegetarian options

## **PACKED LUNCH**

Children's packed lunches should provide balanced nutrition and match the appetite and tastes of the child. As children grow, they need starchy foods to fill them up and provide them with energy. Nutritious meals packed with fibre, protein, carbohydrate and vitamins will also help growing bones and give them a healthy dose of brain power for the afternoon of lessons. These along with fruit and/or vegetables should form the main part of packed lunches. We ask parents to be mindful of the nutritional information displayed on any packaging.

Packed lunches should be brought to school in a named, suitable container to ensure the food is stored securely and appropriately until the lunchtime period. Where possible, an insulated bag and/or ice pack might be used. An additional drink might be included too.

All uneaten food and waste will be kept in the lunchbox and returned home with the child so that parents are able to monitor their child's food consumption. All children are supervised during lunchtime. All children are encouraged to eat their sandwiches, wraps, pasta and other savoury foods first, then to move on to yogurts and fruit, leaving cake and biscuit items to last.

Ideally, packed lunches should include:

- Some starchy foods such as bread (sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps and bagels), pasta, potatoes, couscous or rice (choose wholegrain where possible)
- At least 1 portion of fruit and 1 portion of vegetables or salad. One portion of vegetables/salad is roughly a handful (child size handful for a child's portion)
- Dairy food such as cheese or yoghurt
- Meat, fish, or another source of protein such as eggs, beans and pulses, hummus, falafel

Packed lunches should not include:

- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Biscuits
- Cakes
- Foods containing nuts

Other items that may be included include a low fat / low sugar snack such as a fruit scone, a plain biscuit, plain breadsticks, rice cakes or crackers.

If concerns arise regarding the content, quantity or consumption of a child's lunch, the school may make contact with parents or carers.

### **DRINKS**

All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day. Children are permitted to have sugar free diluted juice in their bottles for packed lunches. Additional access to drinking water is available in each classroom. Children are encouraged to drink more after physical exercise and on hot days. Water is available on the tables at lunch time. We believe that such access to drinking water:

- Promotes good health and wellbeing amongst pupils, staff and other adults
- Reduces tiredness, irritability and distraction from thirst
- Can have a positive effect on pupils' concentration throughout the day
- Raises awareness of the importance of adequate fluid intake as part of a healthy, active lifestyle
- Demonstrates to parents, carers and the local community that the school values pupils' health and wellbeing

### **SPECIAL OCCASIONS**

As a school, we recognise the importance of attaining a balance between enjoyment and health in relation to food and understand that there are seasonal and special occasions when food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. During special events like end of term class parties and fundraising cake sales, foods other than fruit or vegetables may be encouraged, but the staff will remind the children that this is an occasional treat and not every day food. We welcome a variety of foods, from different cultures, for children to try. Class teachers will provide parents/carers with information on celebration food to ensure that we are taking into account dietary requirements. Occasional fund-raising events may include the sale of treat food such as cakes, but the inclusion of other foods will also be encouraged. For birthday celebrations, parents are welcome to send in treats such as bubbles or fruit for their child to share with the class on their birthday. We do not permit chocolates, sweets and cakes for birthdays.

### **DIETARY REQUIREMENTS, ALLERGIES & INCLUSION**

Parents or carers of children who follow a special diet for medical or religious reasons, or due to allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information is available in the school office and communicated to relevant staff members in school, including the kitchen staff, if appropriate. Where necessary, parents or carers will meet with a member of staff and/or the School Nurse, to write a detailed care plan, personalised to reflect the needs of their child.

Children are reminded not to share packed lunches and parents are reminded about the need to avoid sending in any foods containing allergens such as nuts, to support us in our commitment to be an allergy aware environment. There is an Allergies Policy.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

Our relationship with parents/carers is very important and we aim to support them with information and advice around food, so that they are best prepared to make healthy choices for their families.

We will:

- Keep parents informed about healthy eating policy and practice
- Share with parents/carers information about the best practice known with regard to healthy eating so that they can support the key messages being given to children at school
- Remind parents regularly about the desirability of their child/ren having a bottle of fresh water every day and having a healthy snack with fresh/dried fruit or vegetables.
- Ask parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or children with allergies, to provide as much information as possible about suitable foods

The school expects staff to contribute to and support this food policy across the school day. Staff and visitors are expected to model good practice around food and drink in line with the policy, when in the company of pupils.

## RESOURCES/ WEBSITES

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/Are-you-packing-a-healthy-lunch.PDF>

