



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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Healthy Eating Policy

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to assist teachers, pupils and parents in making an informed decision in relation to healthy eating and to comply with HSE and nutritionists guidelines distributed to schools.

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Policy Introduction

In Powerstown Educate Together National School, we promote a healthy eating policy. This interim policy was created in conjunction with staff and the Board of Management prior to the opening of the school. For the successful implementation of this policy, it will require full support from parents and staff.

Lunch Breaks

The children, at present, have two breaks at which they eat their lunches. It is hoped that the children will be both encouraged by their peers and enticed by the variety of fruit and vegetables they will see being consumed around them, to try various healthy options and eventually find some that they like to eat.

Children are encouraged to bring home all food that is not eaten during the school day. It is important that parents check their child's lunch box to monitor what their child has eaten. It is essential that children come to school with a freshly packed lunch every day.

Lunches/Snacks Suggestions

Suggestions for lunches include the following and would ideally include a piece of food from the four main shelves of the Food Pyramid:

- Sandwiches (made from bread of all types)
- Filled rolls (of all types)
- Wraps, pitta breads, bagels, scones
- Sandwiches, rolls, wraps and bread may have fillings of any kind- chocolate spread as a treat on Fridays only.
- Crackers (preferably wholegrain/wholewheat) and cheese (avoiding pre-packaged ones)
- Yogurt, yogurt drinks and fromage frais (excluding chocolate ones)
- Cheese of any kind
- Fruit or vegetables of any kind
- Pasta, spaghetti or rice in small containers
- Combination of foods – i.e. Slices of pizza or quiche
- Slices, cubes of chopped meat, chicken, fish or hard-boiled eggs.

Yogurts should be of suitable size and easy for infants to eat without spilling.

Suggestions for Healthy Break are as follows:

Fruit

- Any whole piece of fruit such as an apple, pear, banana or orange
- A bowl of chopped fruit such as pineapple cubes, melon pieces etc
- A bowl/pack of dried fruit such as raisins, dried apricots etc.
- It is important that any food is made easy for infants to eat.

Vegetables

- Chopped peppers, carrots, celery sticks, cucumber etc
- Baby tomatoes or other whole baby vegetables

Drinks

It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. Almost 2/3 of the body is made up of water. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Recent studies have shown that children who are dehydrated are less able to concentrate properly, especially at subjects like Maths. Therefore, we would recommend that **every child bring a drink of water each day**. Where a child brings more than one drink to school each day, one should be water.

Drinks that are encouraged are tooth friendly drinks, as follows:

- Water
- Flavoured water
- Milk (no flavoured milk)
- Fruit juice (preferably diluted and unsweetened)
- Diluted drinks/squashes (sugar free)

Sugar

- We **strongly discourage** food of any kind which is predominantly sugar – e.g. fruit winders, cereal bars etc. Which are the equivalent pure sugar or sweets and we strongly recommend that such food would not be included in your child's lunch.

Unsuitable foods

The following foods are discouraged for consumption as school lunches:

- Fizzy drinks of any kind
- Crisps
- Chewing gum
- Sweets
- Chocolate bars
- Chocolate/icing covered cakes/bars/biscuits/treats/cereal bars/health bars
- Pre-packed combination lunches

Nuts – Allergy risk

Due to the risk of allergic reactions to peanuts or products containing nuts, pupils are asked not to bring peanut butter or products containing nuts into school.

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is a good start to a child's day and gives them the energy they need to concentrate, learn and participate fully in school activities. Therefore we would encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast before coming to school.

Hygiene

Pupils in our school will be aware of the importance of food hygiene and safety, when preparing and eating lunches, e.g. washing hands, have clean lunch boxes etc Signs will be displayed throughout the school to encourage pupils to become more aware of this.

Environment

In keeping with our ongoing environmental awareness, a Healthy Eating Policy will reduce the amount of litter in the school and will give the pupils an understanding of how people affect the world around them and how they can improve it.

In doing this, we will encourage the pupils to cut down on litter produced by packed lunches e.g. using re-sealable bottles instead of cartons or re-usable airtight containers rather than disposable wrappings.

A large percentage of school waste is composed of organic material (e.g. fruit and vegetable peelings) Pupils will use special compost bins to dispose of organic material. This compost will be used as soil conditioner or surface mulch to help us in maintaining our school gardens.

Any packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal. Any fully uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

Birthdays/Parties

At Powerstown Educate Together National School we discourage party bags, cakes or sweets. Handing these out takes up a lot of teaching and learning time throughout the year and can put pressure on other parents to supply sweets and treats on their child's birthday. **If you wish to mark your child's birthday please see their class teacher for advice.** Every child in the school is made to feel special on their birthday by the school community. School staff cannot be responsible for handing out party invites. Parents can do this in a subtle manner outside the building.