

Danu Community Special School

Roll Number 20548N

Healthy Eating Policy

November 2019

Introduction

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life). To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we have devised a Healthy Eating policy. This initial Healthy Eating Policy at Danu Community Special School (CSS) was devised by staff members to promote a positive and healthy attitude towards food and nutrition for the whole school community.

Rationale

Children need to have a healthy diet that provides adequate energy and nutrients and which is balanced and varied in all the Food Pyramid groups. A well-nourished child is a child that is healthier and better equipped to learn and develop at school. The early years of life – mostly spent at school – are essential for the setting of healthy eating habits; it has been shown that eating habits developed during childhood remain in adulthood.

Aims

1. To work in partnership with Parents/Guardians and professionals to support each child to develop healthy eating practices which will become embedded for life.
2. To work in partnership with Parents/Guardians and professionals to support children to deliver an effective and consistent approach to healthy eating practices.
3. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
4. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
5. To deliver an effective and consistent approach to healthy eating practices.
6. To raise awareness and promote a positive approach to food nutrition and oral health education.
7. To encourage responsibility and accountability in parents in offering healthy choices to their child.

Role of Parents

- To encourage and support school policy on Healthy Eating
- To facilitate and provide healthy food choices in lunch boxes for their child
- **Parents/Guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

Role of the School

- As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) at Danu Community Special School (CSS) students will develop an awareness of and understanding of Healthy Eating.

- Positions healthy eating in a broader context of healthy living for example oral health, cookery, exercise etc.
- To encourage students to make healthier choices and take responsibility for the choices they make.
- To promote and encourage healthier options such as fruit and vegetables.
- To promote drinking water as much as possible and provide students with opportunities to drink water on a regular basis at school.
- To promote a 'sugar free' reward system in school except on special occasions.
- To invite health care professionals, such as the dentist, dental nurse, doctor and nurse to the school to speak with the students.

Healthy Lunch Boxes

Each student will bring their own lunch box to school daily. 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). The Healthy Lunch Box Guide (Appendix 1) is designed to help provide quick, appetizing, and nutritious lunches for your child. Danu CSS endorses these guidelines and recommends that parents adhere to them in the preparation of school lunches.

Drinks

It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. If they do not drink enough, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Drinks should always be included for break-time and lunch. Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children. Because of its natural sugar content, unsweetened fruit juice should only be consumed with meals and ideally diluted (one part juice to ten parts water).

Healthy Snacks

We recommend the following

- Fruit
- Vegetable sticks
- Scones
- Whole grain/ fruit bar
- Raisins
- Popcorn for children over 5
- Crackers, whole grain bread, pitta bread

We ask that students do not bring the following foods to school:

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc.)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Any type of nut due to student allergies.

In addition

- In the interest of parents knowing what their child has eaten in school and in the interest of keeping the school environment clean and free from waste, students

will take home (in their lunch box) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons.

- Students will not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.
- Staff members will model healthy eating patterns and provide support and encouragement to students and parents in cultivating healthy eating habits.
- On trips out or going to the shop students will be encouraged to choose healthy options.
- Each child’s birthday will be celebrated in school. Sometimes this can take the form of a having a party with students from another class. Parents are welcome to send in a cake or some small treats to celebrate the occasion.

Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed in November 2020.

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

By Chairperson_____

Here's what should go in a healthy lunchbox

Vegetables, salad and fruit

At least one portion from the fruit and vegetables food group...

- 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar size fruit
- 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or similar size fruit
- A small glass (150ml) of unsweetened fruit juice
- Half a tin (3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons) of fruit in its own juice
- 1 heaped dessertspoon of dried fruit (for example, raisins or sultanas)
- 1 small bunch of grapes (10 grapes)
- 1 small salad (for example, dessert bowl sized salad of lettuce, tomato, cucumber and celery sticks)
- 3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons of vegetables (for example, chopped or grated carrots)
- A bowl of homemade vegetable soup in a thermos flask for older children

Did you know?

To avoid soggy sandwiches put juicy vegetables between some lettuce and other sandwich fillings for example, cheese. For younger children cutting fruit into manageable size chunks will encourage them to eat more fruit.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

One portion from the meat and meat alternatives food group...

- 2 slices (50–75g) of cooked meat
- 1–2 eggs (hard-boiled, sliced or mashed)
- A small can (100g) of tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines
- 4 tablespoons of hummus - try out as a dip with carrots or celery

Note: Fish such as tinned tuna or salmon should be included in the lunchbox at least once a week – remove any bones

Did you know?

Lean cuts of meat such as chicken breast are lower in salt than processed meats such as ham and bacon. Choose lean meat more often than processed meat.





Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

One portion from the bread and cereals group which would be...

- 2 thin slices of wholemeal bread
- 1 small bread roll
- 1 tortilla wrap
- 1 pitta bread
- 4–6 crackers or breadsticks
- 1 cup of cooked rice, pasta or couscous
- 1 small bagel

Did you know?

Including wholegrain varieties of breads and cereals in our diet can help us feel fuller for longer and prevent constipation.

Milk, yoghurt and cheese

One portion from the dairy products food group...

- 1 glass or mini-carton of milk (200ml)
- A pot of natural or low-fat yoghurt (125ml) or custard
- 2 cheese triangles
- 2 thumbs (25g) of cheese such as cheddar, edam or gouda varieties

Note: Low-fat dairy products are suitable for children over two years of age. Flavoured milks are also a good source of calcium but have a higher energy and sugar content than plain milk – check labels and compare brands.

Did you know?

Dairy products are especially important in the diets of children and teenagers as they provide calcium to support growing bones and teeth. Low-fat natural yoghurt with fruit is the best option.

SafeFood 'Healthy Lunchboxes- Practical Tips for you and your children on how to prepare a healthy lunchbox' 2018