

# **Belgrove Senior Girls' National School**

## **Healthy Eating Guidelines**



## Rationale

Belgrove Senior Girls', through these guidelines, aim to help all those involved in our school community; children, staff and parents, in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

## Lunch Breaks

The pupils, have two breaks at which they eat their lunches. Our participation in the '*Food Dudes*' project has shown us that healthy eating and healthy lunches can be encouraged for all children, even those who are reluctant to try new foods and tastes. We want to continue to encourage children with these good habits. Equally, we wish to discourage children from bringing lunches to school which are less healthy.

Children are required to bring all uneaten food, wrappers and any other packaging home in their lunch boxes to be disposed of properly in the child's own home so as to reduce litter and protect our school environment. 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:

- Vegetables e.g. Chopped peppers, carrots, celery sticks, cucumber etc
- Fruit e.g. apples, pear, orange, pineapple cubes, banana, berries
- Sandwiches (made from bread of all types)
- Wraps, pitta breads, bagels, scones
- Sandwiches, rolls, wraps and bread may have fillings of any kind e.g. ham, chicken, tuna, hummus, egg etc. but chocolate spread should only be used as a treat on Fridays only.
- Crackers (preferably wholegrain/whole-wheat) and cheese (avoiding pre-packaged ones)
- Yogurt & yogurt drinks (Yogurts should be of suitable size and easy for infants to eat without spilling)
- Cheese of any kind
- Fruit or vegetables of any kind
- Cold cooked dishes e.g. Pasta, spaghetti, chickpeas, cous-cous or rice in small containers
- Combination of foods – i.e. slices of pizza or quiche

## 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**, ideally in a re-usable drinks bottle. 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)

### *Unsuitable foods*

The following foods are discouraged for consumption as school lunches:

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

## Environment

In keeping with our ongoing environmental awareness, Healthy Eating Guidelines 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. Any uneaten food and packaging left over from a child's lunch is brought home in the lunch box for disposal.

### *Birthdays/Parties*

Following discussions with staff and Parent Association members it was agreed that parents should not send cakes or sweets to school on the day of children's birthdays. Every child in the school is made to feel special on their birthday by the school community and birthdays are acknowledged by the class but school staff will not distribute sweets, cakes, goodie bags or party invites.

### **Food Dudes**

Belgrove Senior Girls' National School takes part annually in a Healthy Eating Programme entitled "Food Dudes". Through the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, the Food Dudes programme encourages children to enjoy a healthy diet, which reinforces the healthy eating culture which is promoted within the

school. The Food Dudes programme encourages children to pursue and continue the positive eating habits engendered by the programme as they grow and develop.

### Wellness

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we at Belgrove Senior Girls' Primary School encourage our children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body at each class level and is taught each year. These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as Science and Physical Education.

This policy was ratified by staff and board of management on **13-06-2022**.

Signed:  (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Conor Dilleen (Principal)