



Good Shepherd P&NS

Healthy Eating &

Oral Health Policy

March 2022

Good Shepherd believe that we have an important part to play in encouraging children to make healthy life choices. Educating children on the benefits of healthy eating can bring about both immediate and long term improvements to their quality of life. The rise in childhood obesity and illnesses such as the early onset of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease has demonstrated the dangers of unhealthy lifestyles.

A healthy diet is vital for maintaining and protecting children’s health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development. We aim to help them establish a healthy eating pattern that, we hope, will continue for life.

Proper nutrition is vital for good health and effective learning. The benefits of Healthy Eating for children include:

* Helps children develop, grow and learn well in school
* Avoids childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, tooth decay and anaemia
* Can help prevent health problems later in life, including heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and cancer
* Creating healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating patterns in adulthood can be very difficult
* Sitting down to eat with other children is an important part of a child’s social education

Dangers of Unhealthy Eating include:

* Children with poor diet are more likely to have behavioural, emotional and academic problems at school
* All research suggests that not having breakfast can affect children’s intellectual performance
* Poor diet and inactivity are the root cause of children being overweight or obese. The number of young people who are overweight has almost doubled in the last twenty years
* Eating disorders are common among young people

# Aim and Objectives

We aim to:

* Provide cross-curricular nutrition education that enables pupils to make informed choices without guilt or anxiety.
* Take a ‘whole school’ approach to healthy nutrition.
* Liaise with catering staff to ensure that nutritional standards are implemented by providing attractive, value for money meals that are appropriate for our particular children.
* Provide a pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of each pupil.

Nutritional aims:

* To encourage pupils to choose a variety of foods to ensure a balanced intake in line with the National nutrition guide and nutrition standards.
* Encourage foods which are rich in vitamins, iron and calcium.
* Promote starchy foods as a source of energy.
* Encourage the consumption of milk and water.
* Discourage sugary drinks and snacks between meals.

# Water

Research indicates that school children do not drink enough water during the school day and that this affects their concentration and behaviour.

The school recognises that children concentrate better, are healthier and more comfortable if they are not dehydrated, and the best way of ensuring adequate fluid intake is to provide access to water as needed.

All children are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school each day. This is kept in an accessible place according to the rules of each particular class.

# School Break

Water should be drunk during the day. Fizzy drinks are not allowed to be consumed in school and fruit drinks etc are only permitted to be taken at lunchtime. These drinks are not allowed during break times or at any other time of the school day.

Children in Nursery are provided with a daily healthy snack. From Primary one to Primary seven, parents are asked to supply their child with **fresh** fruit, a vegetable portion or natural/fruit yoghurt for breaktime. Other snacks such as crisps, snackbars, cereal bars, crackers, pancakes etc. are not allowed to be consumed at breaktime. Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration. Nuts or nut-based snacks are not permitted. **Good Shepherd is a Nut Free School.**

It is impossible for staff to check every child’s snack. We rely on our parents to send an appropriate snack following the above guidelines. It is important that the snack sent to school is fresh.

# Packed Lunches

Packed lunches should include some fruit or vegetables e.g. a piece of fruit, dried fruit, cherry tomato, raw carrot, cucumber wedge. Sugary drinks and chocolate snacks should be avoided and fruit juice or diluted squash should be consumed at lunchtimes only. All uneaten food is kept in the lunch box so parents can keep a check on what their children have eaten. If a member of lunchtime supervision staff is concerned about a child not eating an adequate lunch they will notify the class teacher who will inform the parent.

**Healthy Packed Lunches**

A packed lunch should include a variety of foods from each of the main food groups.

Packed Lunch Suggestions:

• Sandwich, wholemeal roll, pitta bread, bagel, wrap or other types of bread with a tasty filling, for example:

– cheese and tomato;

– salmon and cucumber;

– egg and cress;

– tuna and cucumber;

– cheese and sliced apple;

– chicken and sweetcorn;

– hummus and cherry tomatoes;

– mashed chopped dates with apple.

• Rice, pasta, potato or couscous salad.

• Slices of pizza, quiche or frittata.

• Low-fat soft cheese or hummus with bread and vegetable sticks.

• Vegetables can be used as part of the sandwich filling or included separately, eg cucumber, carrot, cherry tomatoes, celery sticks or peppers.

• Include fresh, canned or dried fruit.

• Remember to include a drink. The best drinks are water and milk.

• Although pure fruit juice contains some naturally occurring sugar, it is also suitable at mealtimes, when it is less likely to cause tooth decay. Limit fruit/vegetable juices and/or smoothies to a combined total of 150ml a day.

• Remember, children have small appetites, don’t pack too much in. The key to success is variety.

**Keep it cool!**

To make sure the lunch is safe to eat, remember to use a cool bag and pop in an ice pack. For more ideas for packed lunches, refer to the leaflet ‘Are you packing a healthy lunch?’ produced by the Public Health Agency (see www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications)

**Sweets, chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not allowed in school.**

Teachers may provide the children with a sweet/chocolate bar on occasions such as class parties.

# School meals

For some children, the lunchtime meal is the main meal of the day. It is important that meals served are nutritionally balanced. Under-nutrition, even in its milder forms, can have detrimental effects on cognitive development, behaviour, concentration and academic performance.

The subtle message that pupils receive about food and health from the daily life of school are as important as those given during lessons, e.g. school menus, peer pressure to eat certain snacks in packed lunches. By working together, we can promote healthier eating habits.

The canteen menu is available on the school website ([www.goodshepherdps.net](http://www.goodshepherdps.net)). This allows the children and parents to choose which days they would like to attend the canteen. A choice of meals is given each day. Staff monitor what the children eat and parents are informed if necessary.

Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration.

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# School Ethos, Environment and Organisation

School meals are eaten in the canteen. Packed lunches are eaten in the classroom supervised by lunchtime staff and assistants.

The school recognises:

* The importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils.
* The value of promoting social skills.

Teachers, canteen staff and lunchtime supervisors work together to create a good dining room experience and the development of appropriate table manners.

Non-teaching members of staff are supported by the school Positive Behaviour policy.

# Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Healthy eating and the exploration of diet and health are covered at Foundation, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in the Curriculum. Through topic work, role-play, science and PDMU children are encouraged to think about diet, health and personal development. This is supported by visits from a local dentist, school nurse general health screening, the active encouragement to participate in extra curricular activities and healthy food provided by canteen staff.

# Physical Exercise

Daily exercise plays an important role in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. It not only brings physical benefits but psychological ones too. Research has shown that it can help with mood, academic achievement and raise self-esteem. All children are encouraged to actively participate in Physical Education and swimming lessons. A variety of after-school sports are available for children to take part in. Additional information is available in the school’s PE Policy.

Year 4-7 classes now participate in the Daily Mile initiative, whereby children from each class walk, jog or run with their classmates in the safety of the school grounds. This helps children improve their physical, emotional and social health and well-being by doing at least 15 minutes of physical activity every day.

**Oral Health**

Healthy teeth and gums are very important in maintaining the physical health and wellbeing of children. Our aim is to help them establish good oral hygiene habits that, we hope, will continue into adulthood.

Looking after a child’s teeth:

* Brush teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. From the age of three onwards it is recommended that the toothpaste should contain more than 1000ppm (parts per million) of fluoride. For children aged 7 and above toothpaste should contain 1350 to1500ppm of fluoride. The level of fluoride can be found on the pack.
* Limit sweets and other sugary foods and drinks to meal times only.
* Offer water or semi-skimmed milk between meals.
* Avoid fizzy and sweetened drinks.
* Visit your dentist every six months (or as frequently as your dentist recommends).

Tooth brushing guidelines:

• Establish early tooth brushing habits.

• Tooth brushing should be carried out twice a day: last thing at night and on one other occasion to remove plaque, prevent tooth decay and prevent gum disease.

• Use a pea size amount of fluoride toothpaste on a dry toothbrush.

• Supervise children’s tooth brushing until at least the age of seven.

• Encourage children to spit the toothpaste out after two minutes of brushing and not to rinse their mouths.

• Remember, prevention is better than cure

We encourage good oral health from an early age. The school:

* Send out information leaflets on healthy teeth (provided by the Trust’s Dental Dept)
* Every child in nursery is given a toothbrush and toothpaste to take home (provided by the Trust’s Dental Dept)
* Send out information via newsletters on maintaining healthy teeth
* Allow only healthy snacks at breaktime throughout the school
* Through our ‘People Who Help Us’ theme we set up a dentist in the classroom with lots of resources eg. Large set of teeth, brushes and storybooks etc
* The dentist visits Nursery and Foundation Stage to speak to the children about looking after their teeth
* ‘Healthy Smile Month’ takes place and the nursery children brush their teeth once a day after their snack
* The children learn about good oral hygiene through the themes ‘All About Me’ and ‘Keeping Healthy’

Parents can refer to the following guide on looking after children’s teeth

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/dentalhealth/Pages/Careofkidsteeth.aspx