

Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Eating at St. Clare's

St. Clare's Primary school recognises that, in order for pupils to achieve their full potential, there is an important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively. Proper nutrition is essential for good health and effective teaching and learning. The school also recognises the role it can play, as part of the wider community to promote family health. Therefore, as a school we want to help establish and maintain life-long healthy eating and drinking habits.

Aims

- Develop and maintain an ethos within school, where a healthy choice is an easy choice.
- Provide cross-curricular education that enables pupils to make an informed choice.
- Improve the health of pupils, staff and families by helping to influence their eating habits through increased knowledge and awareness of food issues.
- Involve the whole community in developing and maintaining healthy eating and drinking habits.
- Have a pleasant and sociable dining experience which enhances the social development of children.
- Encourage foods rich in vitamins, minerals, iron, calcium and protein.
- Encourage a balanced diet and exercise.
- Encourage fluid intake.
- To take account of and accommodate dietary requirements.
- Develop healthy eating habits that will last a life time.

Catering

- School meals are provided by St. Clare's catering staff.
- We currently have two fully qualified cooks and four catering assistants.
- All catering staff have completed training and received qualifications in food hygiene. Both cooks have achieved certificates in nutrition.
- St. Clare's have achieved a four star rating from the 'Food Standards Agency'. This reflects very good food safety management which complies with food safety regulation.

- Individual dietary requirements are catered for within the framework of nutritional standards.
- Children are encouraged to drink water/milk with their midday meal.
- Portion sizes are according to guidelines laid down by BELB.
- As a school we strive to intergrate healthy eating and drinking habits in all aspects of school life.

Equal opportunities

St. Clare's Primary School is committed towards equal opportunities in all aspects of school life. All resources used and teaching and learning will support this commitment.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Different ethnic and cultural groups may have different attitudes to Healthy eating. The school will consult children and parents or carers about their needs, take account of their views and promote respect for and understanding of the views of different ethnic and cultural groups.

Curriculum content

There are opportunities for raising awareness of healthy eating in all areas of school life. Specifically many aspects of healthy eating will be found in the 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding' (PDMU) and 'World Around Us' schemes of work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of more general aspects of healthy eating such as break time snacks and drinking water, will be carried out informally through observation, discussion and consultation with staff (both teaching and non-teaching), as well as the children via the 'School Council'.

Breakfast Club

Children who eat breakfast perform better in school and have overall better health. Research has also shown that when students eat a balanced breakfast, test-scores improve, speed and memory skills improve, absenteeism and tardiness decline, as do discipline problems and visits from the school nurse (American Association of School Administrators). Eating a healthy breakfast is also helpful in the fight against childhood obesity (American Association of School Administrators). In St. Clare's we offer a 'Canteen Style' Breakfast club. Food is served from the school canteen and includes several options including hot food.

Objectives of the breakfast club:

- To offer a healthy affordable breakfast to all children attending the school.
- To enable members to make confident choices about a balanced diet.
- To offer opportunities to learn new things and try out different activities.
- To create opportunities for children attending the club to play in a safe environment.

St. Clare's breakfast club is operated by school catering staff and two classroom assistants. We believe that the continuity of staff allows good relationships to be built with pupils. As well as providing a healthy and nutritious breakfast, participants are encouraged to develop their social and emotional skills and become more active. On completion of breakfast children take part in art activities, play with various construction materials and are able to use the adjoining PE hall to play with a variety of equipment e.g. balls, skipping ropes etc. The breakfast club enables children from different year bands to socialise with each other and it provides leadership roles to older children e.g. tidying up play equipment.

To encourage parental and community links with the school, the breakfast club have organised 'breakfast mornings'. This gives parents the opportunity to enjoy a tasty breakfast with their child. All proceeds from this type of activity go to charity.

Break time

Foundation Stage:

All pupils in the foundation stage are provided with a daily snack. Children in Primaries 1 and 2 are offered toast (wholegrain bread), pancakes, various fruit and once a week children have a plain biscuit (reduced sugar/low fat variety). Whole milk or water is also offered during break time. Parents pay weekly for their child's break.

Key Stages 1 & 2:

All pupils in Key Stages 1 & 2 are responsible for bringing their own snack to school. They are encouraged to bring a piece of fruit or a sandwich. Pupils are asked to bring plain water as their drink.

Lunch time

School meals:

School meal provision meets education board guidelines. Menus comply with 'Nutritional Standards' guidelines and portion sizes are regulated by the BELB. Food is provided to meet the needs of the children and staff.

Packed lunches:

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide healthy packed lunches for their children. Fizzy drinks, chocolate, crisps and sweets are not encouraged in packed lunches. Healthy packed lunch suggestions are promoted through the school's monthly newsletter. All packed lunches are stored away from direct sunlight and pupils are advised to bring their packed lunch in a cool bag. Any uneaten food is returned in the children's lunch boxes so the parent/carer can be aware of what the child has eaten while at school.

The school canteen offers all parents/children the option of buying a healthy break or lunch. This includes a filled roll, fruit, yoghurt, milk, pure fruit juice or plain water.

Additional information

Water Provision:

All children and staff have access to drinking water at all times. Consumption is permitted both in class and during break and lunch times. Children may bring in a bottle of plain water or use in class facilities.

Increasing awareness:

At St. Clare's we use our newsletter to promote healthy eating and provide tips to improve packed lunch boxes. This will help ensure that messages about food and drink are reinforced and supported at home. We also have numerous posters displayed throughout the school to remind pupils of the benefit of a healthy lifestyle.

Special Events:

The school ensures that healthy options are available at special events, like class Christmas parties and European Day. If a child brings a birthday cake to school, it will be divided up for distribution at home time.

Allergies:

Parents and carers inform the school if a child suffers from a food allergy, providing information on the foods to which the child reacts and the usual symptoms of the reaction. Parents are also made aware that some children in the school may suffer from food allergies. To ensure all staff are aware of child allergies, a list of class health issues is part of the 'class information' given to each teacher. Children with allergies are also identified for kitchen, lunchtime and school staff.

Cookery Club:

Eating well is essential for good health. To encourage children to make healthy food choices, St. Clare's is involved with the 'Cooking for Schools Campaign'. This project aims to encourage change by helping children cook and will provide children with a fun opportunity to eat and enjoy healthier meals.

The cookery club is open to Primary 7 children, but before cooking can begin participants must have parental consent and have successfully completed health and safety and food hygiene tutorials, which are available on the 'Let's get cooking' and 'Food Standards' websites.

The club is organised by a member of staff and the school cook and activities take place in the school kitchen. It is funded by the 'Extended Schools Project' and supported by the BELB.

Hygiene:

Children are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before handling food. All staff employed in food preparation hold a food and hygiene certificate.

External Links:

At St. Clare's, external agencies, such as the Dairy Council and Life Education Bus are used to promote a healthy lifestyle.

As part of the school's Primary 1 induction day, parents receive a talk from the school dentist who provides information on ways to help keep their child's teeth healthy. We have achieved an award for 'Good Effort' from Save Our Smiles (S.O.S). We also have a school nurse.

St. Clare's have a 'Health Fitness and Well-Being' coach, who teaches children the importance of healthy eating and exercise in a fun and enjoyable way. We also have links with St. Mary's Training College and Energy Fitness.