



RVETNS Healthy Eating Policy

Ratified 23rd September 2021

Introduction

Food and the sharing of food are central to the human story. At Riverview we aim to foster a sense of joy around food, an appreciation of the work involved in producing it and an understanding of the important role the food we eat plays in building and maintaining our health and wellbeing.

The focus of this policy is to support parents, staff and children in their enjoyment of healthy food.

This policy is linked to

- SPHE; Taking Care of My Body – Food and Nutrition and Making Choices
- Science; Myself- Human Life Processes

The school emphasises food as something to be valued and enjoyed and parents will be supported in providing healthy options by expert talks and other opportunities to learn about healthy food for families.

Objectives

- To help children and parents make healthy food choices
- To improve the children's concentration and energy levels
- To develop an awareness of nutrition

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

Lunches

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

- Fruit and vegetables
- Sandwiches (preferably wholegrain/whole-wheat)
- Filled rolls (preferably wholegrain/whole-wheat)
- Wraps, pitta breads, bagels
- Crackers and cheese (try to avoid pre-packaged as these contain higher levels of salt)
- Pasta, spaghetti or rice in small containers
- Slices, cubes of chopped meat, chicken, fish or hard-boiled eggs.

Snacks

Suggestions for healthy snacks include the following;

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 all foods are made easy for children to eat and open.

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. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, and tired. Recent studies have shown that children who are dehydrated are less able to concentrate. Therefore, we would recommend that **every child bring a drink of water to school each day.**

Tooth friendly drinks are encouraged:

- Water
- Milk

Sugar

We **strongly discourage** foods that have high sugar contents.

The following foods are not permitted;

Fizzy drinks, crisps, chewing gum, sweets, chocolate bars, chocolate/icing covered cakes/bars/biscuits.

Exception: Children will occasionally be allowed to have a treat day (at the teacher's discretion).

Nut Allergies

At present, we have a number of children with severe allergies in the school. Restrictions on specific foods, e. g. nuts, are implemented on a class by class basis, depending on the allergies in question. Clear signage will be placed on each classroom door, alerting visitors to the fact that it is a 'nut free room'.

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.

Caring for our Environment

Pupils will be encouraged to reduce litter produced by packed lunches through the promotion of 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 maintain our school garden. Any packaging left over from a child's lunch will be brought home for disposal. Uneaten lunch will be sent home so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

Birthdays/Parties

Children are made to feel special on their birthday by the school community in a variety of ways. However, we do not permit party bags, cakes or sweets. Distributing these disrupts teaching and learning time throughout the year. Staff cannot be responsible for handing out party invites.

Feedback on policy

The Board of Management welcome any feedback or suggestions that parents may have.