



WHOLE SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

Date: February 2008

Reviewed: October 2008

Date of next review: September 2009

(This document is available to the entire school community. It will also be made available on the school website and will be included in the School's prospectus).

I RATIONALE

As a school, we have always prided ourselves in providing the best education to your children. We now wish to extend this ethos by promoting healthy eating patterns to our students, by taking a more pro-active approach to improving their health and wellbeing.

In previous years, as part of the curriculum and to improve the well being of our children, we have incorporated:

- Healthy eating days and activities
- Provision of water fountains for students.

We are now taking this a stage further by introducing a **Whole School Food Policy**. This policy will cover the following:

- Breakfast Club
- Lunch Boxes and food items brought to school
- Food provided at the school during activities and events
- Food provided on School Outings
- School Tuck Shop (senior sector)
- Healthy eating, as part of the curriculum
- Extra curricular activities, such as cookery clubs, growing clubs

This is being done in accordance to the recommendations issued by the Department of Education through the HELP document in September 2007. This document can be downloaded from www.education.gov.mt for further guidance.

Our belief is that a balanced healthy, nutritious diet is important for the development of a child's physical state, as well as for their intellectual abilities. Feeding the body with the proper nutrients helps fuel the mind to be more receptive to learning new skills.

2 AIM

To ensure that all aspects of food and drink in school promote the health and well-being of our students.

To provide a supportive school environment which encourages a healthy lifestyle and promotes healthy eating early in life to ensure life long good habits.

To provide a flexible curriculum highlighting health, diet, nutrition and Physical Education as part of a lifelong healthy lifestyle.

To provide a clear and consistent message regarding food, beverages and healthy eating throughout the school.

3 INITIATIVES

3.1 Senior Sector Tuck Shop – Working with the School Caterer

3.1.1 The school caterer must meet the new nutritional standards for Schools and Tuck Shops (January 2008) and all food sold at school as listed in *Appendix one*. This applies to all food sold at the Tuck Shop and through any vending machines in the same area.

3.2 The school will include, as it has in the past and will continue to include, work associated with healthy balanced diets in its curriculum

As part of the work that children do in science lessons, Home Economics, and PSD they will be taught:

- The components of a healthy diet
- The importance of healthy eating both now and in the future
- Measuring and weighing recipe games
- Practical Cooking Sessions
- Food on the plate games
- Food in history
- Extra curricular activities, including:
 - Nutrition Talks
 - Healthy food served during school activities
 - Growing Clubs, Cookery Clubs
 - Field Trips

The school will enlist the help of its Nurse / Health Officer to enforce and help promote healthy eating habits. The school will also arrange for advice and assistance about healthy eating issues to be provided to parents.

3.3 A Healthy Breakfast at School – Introduction of a Breakfast Club within the Junior Sector.

Fact: *Breakfast reduces declines in attention and memory over the morning in school children. (Wesner 2003) Many children go without.*

As of March 3rd 2008, the first fifteen minutes of the school day are going to be dedicated to *A Healthy Breakfast*.

Students are to bring a light breakfast from home, in conformity with *Appendix One*.

It is recommended that a child's school breakfast will include any of the following:

- Breakfast Cereals and Cereal Bars, low in fat and sugar, high in fibre (*containing not more than 25% total sugars if dried fruits are included*)
- Fresh fruit and vegetables, e.g. apple/orange/banana, cherry tomatoes, carrots sticks, mini fruit chunks, etc
- dairy food, e.g. cheese, plain/fruit yoghurt, etc. (*Yogurt is not to contain more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates*)
- Beverages as stipulated in *Appendix One*.

Students are not encouraged to bring milk to school due to its low storage life.

3.4 The school will provide information on healthy foods that should be included in Lunch boxes from home – Healthy Lunchbox Initiative

The short term effects of unhealthy packed lunches could include poor growth and development, behavioural problems, tooth decay, obesity and anemia (Putland 1993)

All Lunchboxes are to conform to *Appendix One*

It is recommended that a child's lunch will include the following:

- A portion of starchy food, e.g. wholegrain bread, pitta bread, plain crackers, pasta or rice salad
- Fresh fruit and vegetables, e.g. apple/orange/banana, cherry tomatoes, carrots sticks, mini fruit chunks, etc
- A portion of milk or dairy food, e.g. cheese, plain/fruit yoghurt, etc.
- Small portion of lean meat, fish or alternative, e.g. two slices of ham, chicken, beef, cheese, tuna, egg or hummus, etc.
- Beverages as listed in *Appendix One*

Parents are advised to include an ice pack. Food products prepared and stored in ambient temperatures, can after a period of between two to four hours, have increased levels of bacteria in them, which may be harmful to your child.

In addition, the school recommends that parents do not include the following items in packed lunches:

- Sweets, chocolate, etc.
- Crisps or any savoury snacks high in salt and fat
- Fizzy drinks/sugary drinks
- Sweet cakes, e.g. sugary cakes, sponge cakes, doughnuts, etc..
- Packets of salted nuts

A cloth Napkin is to be packed in your child's lunchbox on a daily basis.

3.5 The school will Reward pupils for a healthy Lunchbox

- Incentives will be given to Junior Sector Children to encourage healthy eating. Class records will be kept.

3.6 Water Provision and Consumption

Drinking Water and keeping hydrated throughout the day helps to increase children's alertness making them more ready and able to learn at school. This means that students should not only have fresh drinking water with their lunch but it should be available throughout the day.

WHO recommends that school children drink between 1 to 1.5 litres of water every day

- The School will encourage the use of sports-style water bottles to all students.
- Encourage students to fill them at home to bring to school
- Raise parents' awareness of keeping the bottles clean and full.
- Provide and maintain water fountains in school

- Allow for adequate water breaks throughout the day
- Ensure extra provision of water after physical education.

3.7 Birthday Cakes

- All birthday cakes sent to School should be plain and will not contain any cream.

3.8 School Outings

- Any refreshments served by third parties during organised School Outings will conform to list of permissible foods in Appendix One.

3.9 Class Activities and Student Fund Raising

- All school cooking and baking activities are to conform with Food Recommendations in *Appendix One*
- All food and beverages served or offered during student events and activities during the school day will conform with the recommendations in *Appendix One*
- Traditional and Seasonal Sweets such as *Figolli, Prinjolata* etc will continue to be prepared as class activities, and/or fund raising activities, however low sugar varieties will be produced where possible.

3.10 Promotional Activities and Sponsorship

- The School will not engage in promotional Activities, Sponsorships & Advertising which interfere with the whole school approach to healthy eating.
- The School will provide a consistent healthy eating message throughout.

3.11 The school will make arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the activities to ensure these objectives are met

This policy, its procedures and activities, used to meet the school's Whole School Food Policy, will be monitored and reviewed periodically by the Healthy School Nutrition Audit Board and the Home Economics Seminar Centre who regulate activities, ensure compliance with the HELP document and issue product certification as guidance. All reports on the Whole School Food Policy and its findings will be published.

Appendix One – List of Permissible Foods

Food and Beverage Standards as recommended in the HELP document (*Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan, issued by the Education Division*)

Savoury Items

- A selection of fresh and toasted sliced sandwiched bread, rolls, baguettes, ftira, buns, ciabatta, pocket bread, pitas with healthy fillings¹ preferably using wholegrain bread²
- Hobz biz-zejt – Maltese bread with tuna, tomatoes, onions, lettuce and beans
- A selection of pizzas with healthy toppings preferably using a wholegrain dough base
- Hot dishes such as baked rice and pasta
- Cold Rice, Couscous and pasta dishes
- Pies and Quiches with healthy fillings
- Baked Potatoes, plain or with healthy fillings such as ricotta, low fat cheese, tuna, vegetables, corn and pulses
- Home made soups low in fat and salt.

Salads and Dips

- A selection of salads
- A selection of dips – vegetable, tuna, ricotta, bean, bigilla and hummus

¹ Healthy fillings or toppings are defined as those which are in keeping with Malta's National Dietary Guidelines and CINDI's twelve steps to healthy eating for Children and Adolescents (WHO 2006); they can include one or more of the following: a variety of fresh or frozen vegetables, tuna, sardines, mackerel, salmon, chicken, ricotta, baked omelettes and patties, skimmed mozzarella, low fat cheese, hard boiled eggs, traditional Maltese bigilla, beans and lentils, kunserva, low fat spread, low fat and low salt dressings.

² Wholegrain products include those made with wholegrain flour, wholewheat flour, cracked or bulgur wheat, graham flour, wholegrain corn flour or corn meal, whole oatmeal, whole rye, spelt, triticale, quinoa, wholegrain brown rice flour. The terms multigrain, stone ground and pumpernickel do not necessarily mean that the product is wholegrain.

Savoury Snacks

- Galletti, water crackers, crackers, rice crackers and crisp breads, preferably wholegrain and low fat varieties
- Nuts and seeds, not fried, without any added salt or added sugars
- Dried beans and chickpeas, natural or roasted, without added salt or added sugars
- Soya nuts, without added salt or added sugars
- Air-popped popcorn, without added butter.

Fruit and Desserts

- Individual fresh fruit and fresh fruit salads
- Canned fruit in its own juice, unsweetened
- Plain, dried fruit with no added fats
- Fresh or frozen yoghurts. Fresh yoghurts containing not more than 4% total fats and less than 15% total carbohydrates
- Soya Dessert containing not more than 4% total fats and less than 15% total carbohydrates

Fruit granitas or iced lollies containing not more than 10% added sugars.

Sweet Snacks

- Qaghaq tal-hmira
- Biskutelli
- Chelsea Buns
- Plain Cakes, muffins and biscuits low in fat and sugar, and high in fibre (containing not more than 25% total sugars if dried fruit is included)
- Fruit Bread and Currant Buns, low in fat and sugar
- Breakfast cereals and cereal bars, low in fat and sugar, high in fibre containing not more than 20% total fats, 5% saturated fat, 20% total sugars. Breakfast cereals can contain not more than 25% total sugars if dried fruit are included

List of Permissible Drinks

- Water, still or sparkling
- 100% pure fruit/vegetable juices
- Fresh unflavoured milk or UHT, preferably fresh
- For **Primary School Students** –
containing 4% or less than total fats and less than 15% total carbohydrates
- For **Secondary School Students** –
containing 2.5% or less than total fats and less than 15% total carbohydrates
- Hot tea, using plain leaves
- Cold or hot milk drinks
- Drinks made from fruit, vegetables, yoghurt or milk, or from a combination of these, including smoothies. Containing not more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates.
- Oat, Soya or rice drinks Containing not more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates
- Low fat chocolate drinks Containing not more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates

List of Prohibited Foods

Food and Beverage Standards as listed in the HELP document (*Healthy Eating Lifestyle Plan, issued by the Education Division*)

List of Prohibited Food

- Fried Foods
- Potato Chips
- High fat, high salt processed foods, such as sausages, hot dogs, burgers, fish cakes, battered and crumb coated fried products, salami, mortadella, luncheon meat, processed cheese
- Pizzas with high fat and high salt toppings, such as sausages, salami, pepperoni, high fat cheese
- Pastizzi, sausage rolls, hot dogs, savoury pastries
- Doughnuts, cream and jam cakes, iced cakes and sweet pastries
- Chocolates, sweets and confectionary
- Ice Cream
- Yogurts and Desserts ¹
- Breakfast Cereals and Cereal Bars ²
- Bagged savoury snacks, potato, maize, wheat and rice based snacks.

¹ Containing more than 4% total fats and 15% total carbohydrates

² Containing more than 20% total fats;5% saturated fats; 25% total sugars if dried fruits are added

List of Prohibited Drinks

- Flavoured Water
 - Soft (fizzy) Drinks (regular and diet)
 - Iced Teas
 - Energy Drinks
 - Coffee
 - Beverages containing caffeine including caffeinated water
 - Juices which are not not 100% fruit/vegetable juice and/or have added sugar or additional sweeteners
- Fresh or UHT milk and cold or hot drinks For **Primary School Students** – containing more than 4% fat content, and/or more thsn 15% total carbohydrate
- For **Secondary School Students** – containing more than 2.5% fat content, and/or more thsn 15% total carbohydrates
- Fruit nectars and fruit or juice drinks Containing more than 4% total fats; 15% carbohydrates.
 - Oat, Soya or rice drinks. Containing not more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates
 - Drinks made from fruit, yoghurt or milk, or from a combination of these (including smoothies.) Containing not more than 4% total fats;15% carbohydrates

