

## INTRODUCTION

At Maria Regina College, St Paul's Bay Primary we believe that an essential component in the holistic development of our learners is learning how to live a healthy life.

Our Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Action Plan has been heavily influenced by the national policy: *A Whole School Approach to a Healthy Lifestyle: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity* (2015) and also reflects the L.N. 266 of 2018: HEALTHY LIFESTYLE PROMOTION AND CARE OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES ACT (CAP. 550) Procurement of Food for Schools Regulations, 2018 which states that:

*'(2) Schools shall:*

*(a) implement a programme for the promotion of healthy eating to be established on the criteria issued by the Advisory Council.'*

## THIS ACTION PLAN AIMS TO:

- empower children to achieve the required physical and health literacy, to adopt a healthy lifestyle from an early age and to make informed choices about their lifestyles throughout the life course.

## CURRICULUM

We believe that from an early childhood, students need to become empowered to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, healthy eating and physical activity are a part of our school curriculum.

Our school is committed to:

- align curriculum content with health education standards ensuring consistent messages with those promoted by the Health Authorities.
- inform students of the benefits of consumption of milk, fruit and vegetables.
- participate in the 'New School Scheme' and the National Food Guide which is subsidised by European Union funds and topped up by Government of Malta funds.
- make available free potable water.
- educate students on the benefits of breakfast for life.
- equip students with planning, budgeting and preparation of healthy meals skills.
- ensure all staff and volunteers involved in food preparation e.g. fund raising events and cooking in the classroom, demonstrate good food safety hygiene practices.
- promote interest in life-time physical activities in all pupils.
- create and maintain safe and adequate play facilities in the school.

- promote opportunities for physical activity before, during and after school.
- intersperse sedentary sessions with short bursts of physical activity.
- collaborate with other partners to promote healthy lifestyle.
- stimulate parental involvement in shaping children's habits and attitudes about healthy lifestyle choices.

## **FOOD SUPPLIED AT SCHOOL EVENTS, CELEBRATIONS AND OUTINGS**

All food and drink provided at school events such as school parties, celebrations and fundraising activities must meet the national school food standards established by the national 'Whole School Approach to a Healthy Lifestyle: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Policy' and L.N. 266 of 2018.

For more information, please refer to DLAP 364 titled: Food ideas to be served during school functions. In order to support schools, the Ministry for Education and Employment in collaboration with the Ministry for Health has published a suggested list of food items (not prescriptive) to guide schools in abiding with the legal notice when organising school special events or school functions.

## **SPONSORSHIP**

The school will not take part in sporting events and other promotions sponsored by confectionary and fast food companies.

## **PARENTS/CARERS**

We believe that parental involvement not only enhances academic performance, but it also has a positive influence on student attitude and behaviour. The parents/carers' support is therefore vital for the successful implementation of our school's action plan.

Parents/carers are therefore encouraged to:

- support any school initiatives related with our 'Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Action Plan.'
- expose their children to balanced and nutritious food throughout their childhood.
- foster in their children a love for physical exercise.
- promote participation in physical activity at school.
- empower their children to brush their teeth twice daily from at an early age with fluoridated toothpaste.
- take their children for regular dental check-ups.

## LUNCHES

- Parents/carers are required to ensure that their children have sufficient food in the lunch box which looks good and tastes good, to last throughout the school day.
- Lunch boxes must be clean and clearly labelled.
- Children will be expected to take any left-over food packaging home with them. This allows parents to monitor how much their child is eating.
- Parents/carers are also encouraged to include healthy choices in the food they provide. A list of recommended food can be found below.

## ACCEPTABLE FOOD OPTIONS:

- Fresh or toasted sliced sandwiched bread, rolls, baguettes, ftira, buns, ciabatta, pocket bread, pittas, Maltese bread with healthy fillings
- Healthy fillings and/or toppings such as tuna, sardines, mackerel, salmon, capers, olives and fresh herbs, a variety of fresh or frozen vegetables, chicken, turkey, baked omelettes and patties, skimmed mozzarella, low/medium fat cheese, hard boiled eggs, traditional Maltese bigilla, beans and lentils, low fat spread, low fat and low salt dressings.
- Quiches and pies with a healthy filling
- A selection of pizzas with healthy toppings
- Couscous, bulgar wheat and pasta dishes
- Hot dishes, such as baked rice and pasta
- Vegetable lasagne
- Baked potatoes/jacket potatoes with healthy fillings
- Grilled or baked chicken/turkey/fish fillet
- Grilled/baked not fried fish patties made with healthy ingredients such as tuna, salmon, vegetables and potatoes
- Pasta or vegetable salads with vinaigrette (using olive oil, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice) or with mustard
- Low fat/low salt dips – vegetable, tuna, ricotta, bean, bigilla, hummus
- Galletti, water crackers, crackers, rice cakes and crispbreads, made of white or wholegrain flour, low fat and low salt varieties
- Roasted/dried beans and roasted chickpeas without added salt or added sugars
- Plain air-popped popcorn without added butter and without salt or sugar
- Individual fresh fruits and fresh fruit salads
- Fresh fruit yoghurts (containing not more than 2.5% total fat, 1.5% saturated fat and 10% total sugars)
- Breakfast cereals for which total sugars should not be more than 15g per 100g.
- Plain qagħaq tal-ħmira
- Individually packed buskuttelli
- Still water

*(adapted from the 'Food and Beverage Standards'(2015) as a supporting document to 'A Whole School Approach to a healthy lifestyle: Healthy eating and physical activity Policy' (MEDE, 2015)*

## **List of Prohibited Foods and Drinks**

- Potato chips
- Salami, bacon, luncheon meat, mortadella or corned beef
- Highly processed foods such as sausages, burgers, chicken nuggets, spring rolls, wontons, samosas, fish cakes/fingers and other ready-made crumb-coated products
- Pizzas with high salt/fat toppings such as sausages, salami, pepperoni, high-fat cheese
- Pastizzi, sausage rolls, hot dogs
- Bagged savoury snacks
- Ready-to-use dips
- Doughnuts, cream and jam cakes, iced cakes, chocolates and sweets and sweet pastries
- Carbonated water, flavoured water, soft drinks, iced teas, energy/sports drinks, coffee, hot chocolate and fruit juices

*(adapted from the 'Food and Beverage Standards'(2015) as a supporting document to 'A Whole School Approach to a healthy lifestyle: Healthy eating and physical activity Policy' (MEDE, 2015)*

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are lovely and for many kids, celebrating at school is one of the most special days they remember. However, in view of good food safety hygiene practices, parents/guardians are to refrain from sending any food items to school. Any food items sent for the occasion will be sent home untouched.

## **SANCTIONS FOR NON-COMPLIANCE**

- The School Leadership Team (SLT) and teachers reserve the right to stop children from consuming any food item listed under the prohibited food section in this document.
- An alternative food and beverage option, mainly plain crackers or fruit/vegetable portions as well as water, will be offered to the child in concern.
- We expect that on the following day, the provided home-made lunch is in accordance with our 'Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Action Plan'.

## **PACKING PERISHABLE FOOD**

- Foodborne illness can multiply rapidly at temperatures between 5 °C and 63 °C. That means, that perishable foods, such as cold cut sandwiches and yogurt, can be left out at room temperature for no more than 2 hours before they become unsafe to eat.
- For this reason, it is highly advisable that two cold small ice packs are placed in the insulated lunchbox to keep perishable foods safe.

## **ALLERGIES**

- Allergies to certain foods such as peanuts and peanut products, other nuts, seeds and other derivatives and shellfish can be acute. Parents of children who suffer from life-threatening allergic reactions are encouraged to inform the Head of School as soon as possible.
- As we have a number of children in school with severe nut allergies, we do not permit nuts or nut products (such as Nutella or pesto) as snacks or as part of a packed lunch.