



METHODIST COLLEGE BELFAST
PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT
Healthy Eating Policy



1. Introduction

At MCB Prep we are committed to ensuring that the children in our care grow into healthy adults. We encourage and develop positive attitudes towards food and healthy diet in accordance with the Children Act 2004 ('Every Child Matters'), i.e. they:

- are healthy;
- stay safe;
- enjoy and achieve;
- make a positive contribution;
- achieve economic well-being.

Our Whole-School Food Policy is designed to contribute a vital element to our strategy of creating a school environment in which children can thrive. We believe in a whole-school approach that the key messages about food and drink can be really effectively conveyed.

2. Aims and objectives

- To help children know and understand the importance of food and drink in a healthy lifestyle.
- To help children learn what healthy food is.
- To give children the skills they need to make the right choices with regard to food and drink.
- To promote the physical and emotional well-being of all our children.
- To enforce a safe / allergen free school environment

3. The curriculum

- We will plan explicit teaching about healthy eating in our formal curriculum.
- We will teach children about the preparation and cooking of healthy foods through practical experience, for example, smoothie making, porridge, milk shakes and pizzas.
- Children will learn where food comes from and how it reaches the shops.
- In Science, we will teach about nutrition, the food groups and the need of a balanced diet and healthy body. Children will investigate the nutritional composition of foods by examining package labels.
- Through Mathematics, we will teach children to measure and calculate size and weight.
- In English, we will provide opportunities for children to discuss, read and write about health-related issues, such as Organic foods, and why some parts of the world have a surplus of food, while other parts have famine.
- In Religious Education, children will learn about how food is valued in different societies, and the part food plays in religious custom and practice.
- In Physical Education, children will have the opportunity to learn how their body reacts to exercise, and the importance of food and drink to participation in sport and dance.
- In PDMU, children will have the opportunity to reflect on food-related issues such as how food is advertised, and how we can enjoy treats without damaging our bodies.
- We will also promote healthy eating through the informal curriculum, for example, we will promote healthy eating regularly in assemblies. We will encourage children to participate in school games clubs and sports, and so learn the enjoyment of a healthy lifestyle. We will organise school visits to outdoor pursuit centres, and provide opportunities for children to explore the natural world. Our school site, where possible, will be fully exploited in the interest of the children's physical and emotional development through playground activities.

4. The school environment

- We will not have vending machines on the school site that dispense sweets or chocolate.

- We will encourage children to drink plenty of water by allowing them with a water bottle for use at any time and regular opportunities to drink water throughout the day.
 - Children will be encouraged to bring fruit or healthy snacks to eat at break times. Eating crisps or sweets will be discouraged. We are working towards involving parents in supporting our healthy eating initiative.
 - Birthdays and special events such as Christmas parties in class are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an “occasional treat” and not “every day” food.
 - The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies (including sesame nuts and oil). We are a nut free school and parents of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be displayed in the staff room and in the school kitchen.
5. School lunches
- We will serve only healthy food and drink for our school lunches. The lunches will be prepared by our school contractors. If necessary, a vegetarian option can be made available if requested by a parent. The canteen will serve vegetables and fruit, and all lunches will have the best possible balanced nutritional value.
 - The parents or carers of children who bring packed lunches will be made aware of our healthy-school policy, and given clear guidance about what should be included in a healthy packed lunch.
6. Role of parents and carers
- All parents have been contacted by letter outlining our commitment and suggestions for the promotion of healthy eating.
 - We expect all parents and carers who send their children to our school to respect our healthy food policy and to support it fully through the food they give their children to bring to school.
 - At our Parent Information meetings each year we explain to parents and carers the importance we place on healthy eating, and why we endorse this policy.
7. Pre-school / After School
- Healthy eating initiatives outlined above are promoted in the Pre-school and After school facilities.
8. Monitoring and review
- The governing body will monitor this policy to ensure that our children are taught the importance of healthy eating. It will be reviewed on a regular basis, and at least once every two years.

Revised: October 2019