**Annagh Hill Healthy Eating Policy**

Here at Annagh Hill we regard healthy eating as a very integral part of the school day. It is well known that if we eat healthily, we feel better, become healthier, are more alert and, therefore, learn better.

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the Physical Education (P.E) programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The Science curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children’s understanding and knowledge of how the body grows and develops.

 **Aims of this policy:**

* To promote the personal development and well- being of each child.
* To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
* To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
* To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Lunch is a very important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in saturated fats, sugar or salt.  It should also provide plenty of dietary fibre (roughage).

Here at Annagh Hill the children eat twice a day, before going out to play at small break and before/after play time at big break. To ensure good concentration, it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a bottle of water to school.
Growing children need up to 800mg of calcium each day, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. As some children are allergic to calcium rich dairy products such as milk, or have a low tolerance for dairy, there are plenty of other foods which are high in calcium, easy to digest and delicious, such as: \*almonds, dairy free milk, brazil nuts, sesame seeds, cauliflower and broccoli.

\*Almonds are even more delicious and easier to digest when soaked in water for a few hours.

**A healthy lunch is one which:**
• Is full of goodness containing protein, fibre, vitamins, minerals and calcium
• Contains food with no added sugar, salt or saturated fats
• Contains no artificial colouring or additives
• Gives us strength and energy
• Helps us to look and feel fit and healthy
• Helps our brain power

**What could be in a healthy lunch?**

* A wide variety of fruit in its natural form (peeled and chopped for young children)
* Wholegrain pitta bread
* Brown bread sandwiches with healthy fillings
* Raisins, dates, dried apricots
* Unsalted nuts and seeds, eg, almonds, chestnuts, hazelnuts, pumpkin seeds (**No peanuts due to allergy in school)**
* Vegetables, eg, carrot, celery, cucmber sticks (washed and chopped)
* Wholegrain or vegetable pastas
* Salads, hummus and calcium rich dairy products.

**Foods to avoid for a healthy lunch**

• Crisps, salted nuts and salted popcorn
• Sweets, lollipops, jellies and chewing gum
• Cake, buns, biscuits, pastries and doughnuts
• Chocolate and chocolate spread
• Fizzy drinks and flavoured milk
• White bread

**What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?**
• Water
• Milk, including non-dairy milk
• Home-made smoothies/juices

**What drinks should be avoided?**
• Fizzy drinks
• Sugary drinks
• Hot drinks (in case we spill them)

As a school we devised this policy in order to encourage healthy eating as part of a healthy lifestyle for all of the children we teach. We hope you will help us in promoting this. We want every day in school to be a healthy one and so treats are not encouraged on any school day. Exceptions will be made for special occasions such as First Holy Communion, Confirmation and end of term parties.

We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices. There is an abundance of information online about healthy eating, should you need any further information.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.