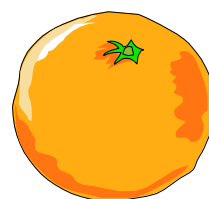
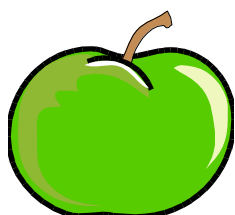


**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL  
MEADOWBROOK, DUBLIN 16**



**A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR  
HEALTHY EATING & ACTIVE LIVING**



**SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATRACHT  
CLUAIN GHLAISE, ÁTH CLIAETH 16**

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last number of years there has been a growing awareness and debate in society about the effects of diet and exercise on our physical and mental well-being. Health professionals have expressed serious concerns over the rising number of health issues directly related to poor diet and lack of exercise. There is also increased emphasis on the role a balanced healthy diet can play in a child's ability to focus, to concentrate and to get the most out of time spent in school.

Here in St. Attracta's Senior School we have for many years encouraged the healthy option of fruit, yoghurt or cheese at the small break time. We have also encouraged parents to provide their children with lunches that are sugar free.

In recent times, more and more parents, and staff, through the Board of Management and the Parents Association, have expressed a desire for the school to move towards a policy that strongly encourages and recommends healthy eating and actively promotes regular exercise. It is our belief that diet and exercise go hand in hand towards fostering a healthy mind in a healthy body.

The Report of the National Task Force on Obesity published on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005 states:

*“The taskforce is very concerned that childhood obesity has become the most prevalent childhood disease in Europe. It is estimated that over 300,000 children on the island of Ireland are overweight and obese and this is projected to increase annually by 10,000. It is clear that halting the rise in levels of overweight and obesity presents a major challenge. This can only be done by a concerted effort by everyone to protect future generations from the inevitable premature deaths, ill health, psychosocial problems and the projected adverse economic costs on society that will arise if we do nothing.... All schools, as part of their school development planning, should be encouraged to develop consistent school policies to promote healthy eating and active living, with the necessary support from the Department of Education and Science. Such policies should address opportunities for physical activity, and in the case of primary schools in partnership with parents, children's lunch boxes”.*

Research suggests that food consumption patterns are established early in life and many of our attitudes to health and its influence on our lives are set in childhood, so it is clearly important that any attempts to produce long-term improvements in the nation's diet should start with children. This policy document strives to address this recommendation.

## AIMS

We have entitled this document a *Whole School Policy for Healthy Eating & Active Living*. We see it as a shared, evolving document for all those involved with our school. The purpose of the document is to

- ... educate children to make healthy choices
- ... encourage children to see a link and to establish a balance between food intake and physical activity in their daily living
- ... develop a positive approach to food, nutrition and all aspects of health education
- ... provide an effective and consistent approach to healthy eating practices, while ensuring that individual cultural and dietary needs are facilitated
- ... promote healthy eating and active living as necessary and enjoyable aspects of young people's lives in order to allow them to make independent and informed choices both now and in the future

## POLICY

School management and staff will

- ✚ develop an awareness and understanding of healthy eating and active living through the Social Personal & Health Education Curriculum and the Social Environmental & Scientific Education Curriculum
- ✚ position healthy eating in the broader context of healthy active living, i.e. oral health, cooking, daily exercise, etc.
- ✚ educate children to make healthy choices and to take responsibility for the choices they make
- ✚ request that parents ensure that children have a healthy breakfast every day before school
- ✚ request that parents provide children with balanced healthy lunchboxes and that they facilitate children's healthy choices
- ✚ request that lunchboxes are free of bars and sweets, with the exception of a Friday treat, should parents so wish
- ✚ encourage and foster in children a sense of responsibility and independence regarding their own lunchboxes
- ✚ continue the current policy of encouraging fruit for little break
- ✚ continue the current policy of banning crisps and crisp-like snacks, fizzy drinks and chewing gum
- ✚ promote the '5 A Day' message, by encouraging fruit and vegetables as important elements of the child's lunch box
- ✚ encourage participation in the school's milk scheme, whereby provision is made for a carton of cold milk at lunchtime
- ✚ facilitate the consumption of water as much as possible and provide children with opportunities to drink water on a regular basis at school
- ✚ promote a 'sugar free' reward system in school, except on special occasions

- ✚ take due cognisance of particular cultural and dietary needs of individual children
- ✚ arrange for health care professionals, such as dentist, dental nurse, doctor, nurse, nutritionist, physiotherapist to visit the school to speak to the children about healthy eating and active living
- ✚ provide children with a physical education programme which is varied and challenging
- ✚ encourage parents to walk their children to school when and where it is safe to do so
- ✚ encourage active play in the playground at break times
- ✚ encourage children to include daily exercise as part of a healthy living routine

## **EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

A copy of this policy on healthy eating and active living is being circulated to all parents. All members of the teaching staff along with parents and the Board of Management have been involved in the preparation of this policy, which will be reviewed at regular intervals.

# SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATHRACHT CLUAIN GHLAISE, ÁTH CLIATH 16.

## A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR HEALTHY EATING & ACTIVE LIVING

Dear Parents/Guardians,

In recent times, more and more parents and staff, through the Board of Management and The Parents Association, have expressed a desire for the school to move towards a policy that strongly encourages and recommends healthy eating and actively promotes regular exercise. It is our belief that diet and exercise go hand in hand towards fostering a healthy mind in a healthy body.

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The report goes on to recommend:

*“All schools, as part of their school development planning, should be encouraged to develop consistent school policies to promote healthy eating and active living, with the necessary support from the Department of Education and Science. Such policies should address opportunities for physical activity, and in the case of primary schools in partnership with parents, children’s lunch boxes”.*

With reference to this report, a policy document was drafted and following consultation with parents, pupils, teachers and Board of Management there was further discussion and fine-tuning. At January 2006 meeting of the Board of Management the policy was ratified.

The Board of Management requests that all parents/guardians read this document carefully. We have entitled this document A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING as we see it as a shared, evolving document for all those involved with our school. It encompasses the formal curriculum, consumption of food at school; events at school; pastoral care and welfare issues; participation in projects such as ‘The Green Schools Project’ and ‘Healthy Eating Week’.

We appeal to you the parents to adopt it in full and to support it by providing your children with healthy balanced lunchboxes. We look forward to your co-operation in implementing this policy starting with immediate effect.