

## Healthy Eating Policy

### Benefits of Healthy Eating

- Helps young people develop, grow and do well in school
- Prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, tooth decay and anaemia
- May help prevent health problems later in life, including heart disease and cancer
- Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating patterns in adulthood can be difficult
- Sitting down to a meal with other young people and staff is an important part of a young person's social education
- Healthy eating supports the Healthy Schools agenda

### Consequences of Unhealthy Eating

- Hungry learners are more likely to have behavioural, emotional and academic difficulties at school
- Research suggests that not having breakfast can affect intellectual performance
- Poor eating habits and inactivity are the root cause of overweight and obesity. The percentage of young people who are overweight has almost doubled in the last twenty years
- Eating disorders are increasingly common among young people
- Statistically, overweight school children are bullied more than any other group
- 'Many teenagers are overfed but undernourished' (BUPA).

### Aim

A healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting young people's health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development. Our aim, as part of our core values, is to help them make positive choices to establish a healthy lifestyle that we hope will continue into adulthood.

Engaging Potential (EP) will achieve this aim through the following approaches:

- Providing food and drink for breakfast if needed and lunch as part of a balanced diet that is rich in vitamins, iron and calcium
- Providing young people with the opportunity to learn about healthy eating through the Curriculum (Science, Sport, SMSC and Life Skills etc), and to make informed choices about their diet.
- Providing young people with the opportunity to cook informally with staff, learning either Cooking basics or dishes from around the world in SMSC Our World Cooking sessions.
- Encouraging a balanced diet
- Offering fruit juice, Squash (with no added sugar) semi-skimmed milk, tea, or water to drink
- Encouraging fluid intake with an easily accessible water supply throughout the day
- Taking into account, accommodating and supporting young people with their dietary requirements and any procedures associated with the taking of food or drink items required.
- Ensuring high standards of hygiene for both staff and young people
- As many staff as possible having a food handling / hygiene certificate
- Developing healthy eating and drinking habits that will last a lifetime.

### Drinks

We recognise that low fluid intake can lead to reduced academic performance through poor concentration and lethargy, reduced physical performance and health problems including

headaches and urine infections. All young people and staff have free access to water throughout the day. Squash used, is with no added sugar.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Healthy Eating has been built into the Curriculum, offering practical experience of preparing foods and promoting an understanding of the benefits and characteristics of a healthy diet.

There are also opportunities to gain accreditation in Food Handling and Preparation (ASDAN Foodwise) and Food Technology. When looking for recipes, staff will encourage young people to look at those that are low sugar, salt and fat .

The display board in the kitchen will be relevant to the SMSC focus for that term. Reference is made to the display during sessions where appropriate and young people encouraged to think about alternative ingredients.

Mentors sit with young people during snack and mealtimes to provide a good role model, encourage good manners and lead conversation.

Mentors and tutors involve young people in preparing food and clearing up afterwards.

Food and cooking activities are used in a variety of ways to teach learners and widen their experience of food. They are given the opportunity to touch, taste, smell and feel a variety of foods.

### **Recommendations**

Classroom teaching and food technology sessions are supported by the food offered at lunchtime, including reinforcing healthy choices.

Our overall aim is to provide a diet that contains:

- MORE – fruit and vegetables
- LESS – fat, sugar and salty foods

To ensure a balanced diet, foods from each of the following food groups are provided:

- Bread, cereal and potatoes
- Fruit and vegetables
- Milk and dairy foods
- Meat, fish and alternatives (tuna doesn't count as an oily fish: sardines, fish cakes, pilchards etc)
- Small amounts of foods containing fat and sugar

Our key message to the pupils is:

- Enjoy your food
- Eat a variety of foods, from all the food groups each day
- Don't skip meals
- Snacks can be an important part of a healthful diet. Well-chosen snacks can help you manage weight, hunger, health and energy
- The consumption of acidic soft drinks and carbonated drinks raises concern about possible dental erosion – these are not offered to young people and should not be drunk on the premises.

### **Parental / Carer Involvement**

Few students bring packed lunches, but parents / carers of those that do are encouraged to include healthy opinions.

**Equal Opportunities**

The healthy eating and drinking systems and strategies are accessible to all children and staff regardless of race, gender and SEN. Dietary, allergy and religious requirements will also be observed.

**Health and Safety**

Food will be stored according to instructions on packaging and common sense. Advice will be sought from Environmental Health if necessary. EP registered as a food business establishment in March 2012, and is subject to routine inspections by the Environmental Health and Licensing department at West Berkshire Council.

Young People are encouraged to take responsibility for food hygiene and safe handling of food.

**Monitoring the Healthy Eating Policy**

Provision for healthy eating and drinking throughout the organisation will be monitored by the management team on an ongoing basis. This policy will be reviewed annually as part of EP's annual cycle of review.