



Smart Snacks Policy

Signed

Chairperson of BOG

Date

**St. Mary's P.S.,
Smart Snacks Policy**

Introduction

Our school motto is **Our Success is Doing Our Best**. This motto forms part of our overall school vision. By educating and caring for our pupils, we aim to develop them to their full potential spiritually, socially, emotionally, morally, academically and physically. If our pupils are to develop to their full potential, it is vital that they are educated about the need to eat a balanced diet and develop healthy eating habits. Smart Snacks (Healthy Breaks) five mornings per week supports the development of our pupils' healthy eating habits.

Rationale

The reasons for and benefits of having Smart Snacks to 5 days per week are outlined below.

- Children, like adults, are advised to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Our pupils are at school for 5-6 hours a day (depending on their age), which accounts for approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ of the child's day. Thus, it is vitally important that our pupils eat 2-3 portions of fruit and vegetables during school hours each day. Otherwise, it becomes very difficult to ensure that pupils get the recommended daily allowance of fruit and vegetables.
- We recognise that snacks are an important part of a child's diet. However, high sugar snacks and drinks can contribute to poor dental health (as opposed to eating fruit and vegetables and drinking milk or water). The frequency of consumption of sugary food and drink particularly between meals is well proven to be the main cause of dental decay. It is therefore important to limit sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes, drinking only water or milk at break-times.
- Poor nutrition in childhood may also lead to long-term health problems. Obesity has reached worrying trends in children in Northern Ireland, 1 in 3 boys and 1 in 4 girls of 12 year olds carry excess weight. N. Ireland has also one of the highest rates of Heart disease and Cancer in the world. Diet plays an important role in the prevention of these diseases. Promoting the message of healthy eating in children lays the cornerstone for minimising the risk of these diseases in later life.

Aim

To promote Smart Snacks in our school.

Objectives

At mid - morning break (5 days per week), pupils will be encouraged to : -

- Drink milk or water.
- Eat fruit and / or raw vegetables.
- Have their Smart Snacks (water or milk and fresh fruit and / or vegetables) as a sit down meal with peers in small groups 10 minutes prior to going outside at break-time.
- Parents will be encouraged to support our Smart Snacks policy by sending only water, milk, fruit or vegetables to school for break-time or availing of the school offer on Smart Snacks.
- Our Board of Governors is committed to our policy on Healthy Breaks.

Parents can take advantage of the school's offer on:

- a good variety of fresh fruit and vegetables daily at £7.00 per term.
- the school milk scheme which costs £0.21 per day.

Roles & Responsibilities

Pupils

- Pupils are responsible for making healthy choices for their break-time snacks in line with our Smart Snacks policy.
- Pupils also have a role in promoting healthy Smart Snacks to their peers.

Parents

- Parents have a responsibility to encourage their children to have healthy break-time snacks in line with our Smart Snacks policy.
- Parents have a role in promoting healthy Smart Snacks to their children.

Staff

- All staff have a very important role in the promotion of healthy Smart Snacks.
- All staff have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is implemented consistently.

Implementation

- This policy reflects the views of our pupils after consultation with them.
- Members of staff have been consulted on the content of this policy and they have been given a copy of this policy.
- Parents have been consulted on this policy and have been given a copy of this policy.
- The Board of Governors has been consulted on this policy and have received a copy.

Monitoring / Review

This policy will be monitored by staff and the Health Education / PDMU Co-ordinator (Mrs. Siofra Gallagher). Monitoring will be ongoing and regular. This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Principal and the Board of Governors.

Signed _____ (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Signed _____ (Principal)

Date _____