**Healthy Lunch Policy**

In line with health/nutritional guidelines and in accordance with the wishes of parents ,the Marist Primary School adheres to a Healthy Lunch policy. The policy was initially drafted in 2007 and most recently reviewed and updated in June 2021

**Aims**

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

**Objectives**

1. To promote healthy eating habits in our school
2. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
3. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
4. To encourage the children to be aware, alert and responsive to the need to reduce waste litter problems.

**1.Rationale**

Our school recognises that a healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting children’s health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day, both academically and physically and for their growth and development.

**2.Content**

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

**Children are provided with healthy school lunches and are strongly encouraged to avail of them.**

 Parents are asked to inform the school if their child is not availing of the lunch provided by the school.

**Only water and milk are permitted as drinks in school.**

If children bring their own lunch they are allowed to bring the following:

Bread and alternatives (rolls/ pitta bread etc.)

Crackers

Yogurts (with the exception of chocolate yogurt)

Fruit

Cheese

Pasta

Water and milk

Children are not permitted to bring fatty and high sugar foods such as:

Crisps

Cereal Bars

Sweets

Chocolate

On occasion children are allowed to bring ‘treats’ to school for parties and /or school trips. Treats may also, on occasion, be given to the children on occasions by school staff.

**3.Lunch Time Guidelines**
In order to promote the health and safety of all children in the school and prevent the spread of infection, guidelines for eating at lunch and break times are necessary. These are essential and therefore mandatory:

* Children are not to share food or drink.
* Children are not to share food utensils or drink containers.
* Children must bring a lunch box to school everyday
* Tinfoil and cling film are not permitted in lunch boxes. Paper /paper towels, re-usable lunch bags or a small container are suitable alternatives.
* Any uneaten food goes back into the child's lunch box- the parent/guardian will be aware of what their child is actually eating
* All containers should be labelled with the child’s name

**4. Allergies**

In order to protect children who, have serious food allergies, the whole school community will work together to implement age appropriate, responsible measures to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction.  All children in the school will be made aware of the implications of food allergies and how they can assist in preventing allergic reactions. Parents/guardians must notify the school if their child has a food allergy. **Nuts and nut products are not permitted in the school.** If your child has a serious food allergy, as parents, you will be asked to participate with staff in formulating an individual allergy management plan.  This plan will identify how best to minimize the risk of an allergic reaction for your child, taking her/his age and class into account.

**5. Children with Additional Needs**

Some children with additional needs have specific dietary needs or requirements where appropriate and/or necessary exceptions will be made for children with special educational needs while also bearing in mind the overall aim of promoting healthy eating habits

**Ratification and Communication**

The policy was ratified by the BoM in June 2021 and is available on the school website.