Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Healthy Eating Guidelines.

1. Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School, through these guidelines, aims to help all those involved in our school community; children, staff and parents, in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

2. In the Spring of 2012, children in the Junior and Senior schools took part in the *Food Dudes* project which was focused specifically on healthy eating and encouraging children to eat more fruit and vegetables. This was a resounding success, and the school wishes to build on these successes by amending the Healthy eating Guidelines.

3. These guidelines were reviewed during the 2011/12 school year following consultation with the children, Staff, members of the Parents' Association and Board of Management.

4. (a) Nutrition is known to be one of the key factors influencing the health of school children and adults. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The taught curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles.

   (b) A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from the first four shelves of the food pyramid i.e.

First shelf:	Cereals, bread and potatoes.
Second shelf:	Fruit and vegetables.
Third shelf:	Milk, cheese and yoghurt.
Fourth shelf:	Meat, fish and alternatives.

   (c) Children may have one or two treats on special days e.g. end of term, the day of Christmas holidays, summer holidays etc. On these days children will be allowed to include some food from the top shelf of the food pyramid. Occasionally, teachers may give a sweet or a lollypop as a reward.

   (d) Following discussions with Staff and Parent Association members it was agreed that parents should not send cakes or sweets to school on the day of children's birthdays. We are happy to acknowledge birthdays in class and to sing "Happy Birthday" but school staff will not distribute sweets, cakes or "Goodie Bags" sent to school.

   (e) Cans of fizzy minerals and glasses are not permitted for health, safety and litter reasons. Healthier choices of drink include water, milk and unsweetened juice. Furthermore, crisps, sweets, chewing gum are not permitted in school.

   (f) Our participation in the *Food Dudes* project has shown us that healthy eating and healthy lunches can be encouraged for all children, even those who are reluctant to try out new foods and tastes. We want to continue to encourage children with these good habits. Equally, we wish to discourage children from bringing lunches to school which are less healthy, especially those with a high sugar content.

   To assist parents, and to ensure continuity across the school, we have worked with Staff and the Parents Association in drawing up a list of foods that we encourage for lunches and foods that are *not allowed* in the school. This is attached. Parents are asked to study this and support us in implementing this policy.

5. Where children bring lunches to school that are not allowed, teachers will send a note home, with a copy of the policy, reminding parents of the policy and offering suggestions of other lunches which children might bring to school.

6. Children are required to bring all uneaten foods, wrappers and any other packaging home in their lunch boxes to be disposed of properly in the child's own home so as to reduce litter and protect our school environment.

7. All classes will receive a minimum of 2 lessons on healthy eating in each school year.

8. Teachers will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.

9. Healthy eating will be encouraged and promoted in our school through the use of reward systems such as giving out healthy eating stickers, certificates etc. Children will also be reminded of the school's healthy eating policy at assemblies.

10. Eating Times for Children

10.40-10.55am	'Fruit Break': Small portable snack(s) taken to yard for eating under supervision
12:20-12.30 pm	Foods not suitable for outdoor eating can be eaten in the classroom

11. Parents of new children enrolling at Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will receive healthy eating literature and guidelines.

Healthy Eating: Good Food for our Lunch Boxes

Foods allowed	Foods *Not* allowed
Fruit ***At least one portion of fruit daily*** Apple, orange, banana, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, satsuma, manadarin, grapes, plum, peach, pear, pineapple chunks, mango, dried fruit-raisins sultanas, etc. **Vegetables (raw/salad)** ***At least one portion of vegetable daily*** Carrots, peppers, broccoli, celery, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber etc. **Types of Bread** White, brown, wholemeal, soda, pittas, wraps, bagels, tortillas, bread rolls, scones etc. **Crispbreads** Breadsticks, plain, savoury or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads, water biscuits, crackers, plain ricecakes etc. **Yogurts** Fruit yoghurts and yogurt drinks **Cheese** Hard/soft cheese: grated, slices, triangles, cheese strings, cheese tubs with breadsticks etc. **Sandwich fillings** Salad with ham, chicken, turkey, corn beef, tuna, salmon, cheese, egg, jam, hummus, etc. **Cold Cooked dishes** Rice/ pasta/ couscous/ chickpeas with/without meat & veg. **Fluids** Water, milk, diluted drinks, smoothies, yoghurt drinks, soups in thermos flask	*The following foods are not allowed in school. Children will be asked to put them back into their lunch boxes and a note sent home explaining the school policy.* • All Sweets • Biscuits, cakes and buns • Fizzy drinks • All types of crisps and popcorn • Chewing gum • Fruit winders • Chocolate bars and chocolate biscuits • Chocolate yoghurts • Isotonic drinks **Unhealthy lunches which we recommend against** There are a number of lunches that children bring to school which we would recommend against. These include commercial products which are marketed as 'health snacks' such as RiceKrispie Squares, but which are in fact very high in sugar and are of little nutritional value. • Chocolate spread on sandwiches • Croissants • Custard, rice puddings, dessert yoghurts • Ricecakes with chocolate/yoghurt toppings • Cold cooked foods such as sausage rolls and burgers