



## Healthy Eating Policy

### Introduction:

At Newton British School, Al Muraikh we are committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and a healthy diet. Promoting a healthy lifestyle is integral to our curriculum and as a school we know that food is fundamental to the quality of a child's life, not just in providing essential nutrition, but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

*Nutrition is a significant factor in the growth, development and overall functioning of a child. Good nutrition provides the energy and nutrients essential to sustain life and promotes physical, emotional and cognitive development. The development of healthy eating practices and physical activity can prevent disease and support a lifetime of good health. Good nutrition is critical to optimizing each child's potential for success. Meeting nutritional requirements throughout childhood is essential to full intellectual development. Research documents tell us that under nutrition impacts on children's behaviour, performance and overall quality of development. Children require sufficient energy and essential nutrients each day to concentrate on accomplished learning tasks. Even mild and under nutrition and short term hunger are barriers to learning. Meals and snacks should meet children's nutritional needs, provide models of healthy eating patterns, and help children establish good eating patterns at an early age.*

### Aims:

To work in partnership with families to support children in developing healthy eating practices which will become embedded for life.

### Objectives:

- To provide children with positive healthy eating experiences in order to promote their well-being.
- To respect the different dietary, cultural and health needs of all our children.
- To encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards food through the curriculum and all the other learning opportunities that are provided in school.
- To promote an understanding of a balanced diet in which some foods play a greater role than others.
- To raise awareness with children, parents and carers in developing a positive approach to food, nutrition and oral education.
- To encourage responsibility and accountability of all parents and carers in offering healthy choices to children.

### The Importance of Nutrition for Children



A nutritionally balanced diet is important in childhood to ensure optimum development at a time of rapid growth. A balanced diet in childhood is not only important for growth but for learning and promoting positive habits towards healthy eating. An inadequate or unbalanced nutritional intake may not only affect growth and development in childhood, but may also impact on health problems, such as heart disease and obesity in later life. It is the types and varieties of food eaten at this time that ensure nutrient requirements are met and that the diet is nutritionally balanced. Children's diet must include an appropriate intake of foods from the four main food groups:

- **Bread, other cereals and potatoes**
- **Fruit and vegetables**
- **Milk and dairy foods**
- **Meat, fish and alternatives**

### **Being Healthy**

- Eat breakfast every day
- Eat fruit and vegetables daily
- Choose snacks that will provide nutrients to compliment meals
- Avoid snacks and drinks with a high sugar content between meals
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated
- Be physically active every day
- Brush teeth twice a day and visit your dentist regularly

We have fresh drinking water readily available for children and staff and we support the children in recognising that they need to drink water when they are thirsty, hot or tired, or feeling unwell.

### **Special dietary needs and food allergies**

We are sensitive to the needs of children with specific dietary needs. Parents will be asked about any special dietary requirements their child has before their child starts school. Parents of children who have special diets or who have food intolerances are responsible for providing the school with information about their diet and choices available to the child. We update our records regularly.

### **Festivals and celebrations**

At Newton British School we celebrate different festivals and celebrations. We recognise that festivals can provide a valuable opportunity for children to experience diversity from a wide range of cultures and nationalities and the contribution they make to the variety of foods eaten in Qatar today.

### **Organisation:**

- We regard healthy eating as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum.



- Healthy eating education forms an important part of our school's curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition, healthy food choices and exercise is explicitly taught through the Science and PE curriculum.
- All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so that they can have access to water throughout the day. Water coolers are also provided in the school for additional access to drinking water.
- Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, crisps and cakes are actively discouraged as everyday snacks in school or as part of lunch-boxes. Chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not permitted on the school premises or while the children are representing the school. Cereal bars are also discouraged because these can often contain as much sugar as chocolate bars.
- Pupils' lunch-boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Across a week parents are requested to offer a variety of healthy foods for their children.
- Because we recognise that there is no such thing as "bad food", we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation. These "treats" should still be relatively healthy and not excessive, eg. a couple of biscuits or a piece of malt loaf and can be included in a lunch-box from time to time. Crisps and chocolate bars continue to be discouraged.
- Birthdays and special events are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods which are not necessarily a healthy option may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "everyday food".
- Pupils are taught not to share food from their lunch-boxes and parents are requested to avoid sending in food containing nuts. The school cannot guarantee that all parents will comply and for that reason we do not purport to be a "nut-free school". It is in the interest of pupils who do have nut allergies that they learn the risks of cross contamination and that they learn how to manage this.

#### **The role of the school:**

- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all stakeholders are informed about the Healthy Eating Policy and that it is implemented effectively.
- The school encourages staff to be positive role models for the children.

#### **The role of Parents:**

- The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of our children.
- It is the responsibility of parents to supply their children with healthy food on a daily basis and support the school in the implementation of this policy.
- Parents should support the key messages being given to the children at school.
- To inform the school of any dietary requirements or food allergies that their child might have.