



# Food and Healthy Eating Policy

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 served should meet children's nutrition needs, provide models of healthy eating patterns, and help children establish good eating patterns at an early age.

**QPG Hub aim** to encourage and develop healthy eating practices which will become embedded for life.

## **Objectives**

- To encourage children with positive healthy eating experiences in order to promote their well-being.
- To respect the different dietary, cultural, religious and health needs of all children.
- To encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards food through all the learning opportunities that are provided in the club.
- To promote an understanding of a balanced diet in which some foods play a greater role than others.
- To develop children's understanding of the importance of the social context in which eating takes place.
- 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



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but may also impact on health problems, such as heart disease and obesity in later in 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

Encourage snacks and lunches to be nutritious, avoiding large quantities of sugar, salt, saturated fats, additives, preservatives and colourings.

We have fresh drinking water and suitable cups readily available for children and staff

We support the children in recognising that they need to drink water when they are thirsty, hot, tired, or feeling unwell.

### **Breakfast and After School Clubs**

At the QPG Hub breakfast and after school clubs we aim to provide food that is as healthy and as varied as possible.

Breakfasts will consist of a choice of non-sugary cereals, bagels and toast and a choice of spreads, which may include jam and marmite, as well fresh fruit and fresh juices.

At after school club, the children have access to a healthy rolling stack, including fresh fruit. Children attending other after school activities will have a snack kept for when they arrive. Children will be expected to sit at a table and behave in a suitable manner.

Before any child starts to attend the QPG Hub we find out from parents through the registration form if their child has any dietary needs or allergies. This information is made available to all staff to ensure that children only receive food and drink that is consistent with their dietary needs as well as their parents' wishes.



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We take care not to provide food containing nuts or nut products, and are especially vigilant where we have a child who has a known nut allergy.

A typical example of food included in well-balanced snacks are:

- Celery and Carrot sticks
- Fruit
- Wraps
- Rice Crackers
- Grated Cheese
- Sliced Chicken
- Pita Bread
- Hummus
- Orange or Apple Juice
- Water or Milk