

Drinks:

The school no longer sells fizzy drinks. Bottled water and fruit juices are available from the canteen. Several filtered cold water machines have been installed around the school for pupil use. Pupils are allowed to carry bottled water with them around school and we recognise the importance of their being able to drink water throughout the school day. Bottles **must** however be small, made of transparent plastic and, for safety reasons, fit securely within the ledge under the filtered water dispenser taps. Permission to drink water only [not flavoured or fruit drinks] during lessons will be at the individual classroom teacher's discretion. Permission will be constrained by health and safety issues [for example, in a science lab] and will not be granted to pupils who misuse water. Parents are encouraged to check that drinking water bottles are regularly cleaned or replaced. Dirty bottles can become a source of infection.

Packed lunches: some suggestions:

A healthy packed lunch might include some of the following:

- i] sandwiches with wholemeal bread and a protein filling such as egg, cheese, ham, salmon or tuna;
- ii] pieces of fruit or carrot sticks;
- iii] a "healthy" cereal bar;
- vi] milk, water or soup [some pupils are now bringing in small flasks];
- v] An ice-pack helps to keep the food chilled and hygienic.

Eating disorders:

Teaching, pastoral, catering, office and counselling staff informally monitor potential eating disorders. If concerns surface, they are taken to Year Leaders who in turn contact the school nurse. These concerns are then followed up with parents. Although serious disorders such as anorexia and bulimia require prompt, sensitive and expert attention there are wider issues about body size. Our anti-bullying strategies encourage youngsters not to make hurtful comments about weight and shape. In all cases we need to respect each other's feelings, differences and dignity.

Social events:

Several school events include an element of social eating and drinking. Our PTFA International Food Evenings are very popular, not only because the range and quality of food available are outstanding, but because the cultural and social dimensions to these evenings are valued. Parents and friends of the school set up food stalls around the hall so that everybody can enjoy a truly international feast.

If you have any comments or questions about these policies and guidelines, we'd like to hear from you. They are monitored every twelve months with all feedback taken into consideration in our assessment.

Please contact our Healthy Schools' Coordinator, Miss S. Foster on 01254 823362.

Saint Augustine's Roman Catholic High School, Billington

Healthy eating, healthy drinking.



A whole school approach

Leaflet issued to all parents and guardians in December 2007

An overview

"I came that they may have life and have it to the full" John 10:10

This leaflet covers one key element of our strategy to encourage healthy lifestyles within our school community. We have other policies on areas such as sexual health, substance misuse, extra-curricular and physical activities, self respect, respect for others, personal safety and work-life balance. Taken together, these provide a clear and comprehensive philosophy within which we will work to achieve our goals.

A key task parents and schools share is to encourage our children to develop healthy attitudes towards eating and drinking. At St Augustine's we recognise that effective teaching and learning across the curriculum will help them to understand the importance of balance and moderation and the nutritional choices that are available to them. We also want pupils to be aware of how food is produced - whether workers involved have been fairly paid, animals afforded a reasonable quality of life, the environment treated with respect. Although the Food Technology Department has a key role to play in this respect, we believe that there is huge scope for diverse and creative teaching and learning about food and drink in other curriculum areas as well, particularly in subjects such as English, PSHE, Geography and Science.

We are committed to improving the quality of our catering arrangements. From September 2008 we'll have a state of the art new school kitchen as well as a biometric "cashless" system for paying for school meals which gives parents information on what their children have been eating. We want our pupils to enjoy a range of healthy meal options in an attractive social eating environment. We encourage children to be aware not only of the importance of what they eat, but also of how they eat. Good manners in the queue and at the table together with a sense of personal responsibility for clearing up after oneself are characteristics of sound personal and social development. We promote these positive attitudes as part of our wider "curriculum for life". We recognise that we cannot achieve all our goals overnight. Children are bombarded daily with advertising which promotes fatty, salty and sugary products; the fast food restaurants favoured by children have dispensed with crockery and cutlery; the tradition of families sharing evening meals at the table is waning. This is the challenging wider social context in which St Augustine's is determined to achieve its goals.

Catering staff and facilities:

We recognise the need to recruit, train and keep well-qualified personnel and to invest in high quality facilities. We own our school kitchen and catering staff are employed on our own pay-roll rather than by an outside agency. The catering manager liaises regularly with governors, the school leadership team and with children via the Pupil Council which provides feedback and suggestions to her.

Eating areas:

We have been making substantial improvements to the look and feel of our dining area and there is more investment to come. We have also created an enclosed landscaped outdoor eating area with wooden tables and chairs [the "Alfresco"] which has seating for over a hundred pupils. The Pupil Council has been closely involved in the planning of this facility which will continue to expand in area over future years. We have, with some limited success, been working on ways to speed up the time it takes to serve pupils. Our new kitchen layout is intended to alleviate the problem of queueing. It is unlikely, however, that we will ever be able entirely to avoid the need for pupils to queue.

Choice of food:

Our menu is intended to provide a good range of choices. There are some foods however which we no longer provide: we haven't served a chip in over two years, for example. Every day there is a homemade soup [usually vegetarian]. Hot choices include pasta, curries, vegetarian and meat based moussaka and lasagne, stews, stir-fries and fish. All food is sourced locally and is freshly cooked. Vegetables served include cabbage, broccoli, carrots and jacket, wedged or mashed potatoes. Cold choices include salads, wraps and sandwiches. There is fresh fruit available every day. The kitchen continually trials ideas suggested by the Pupil Council, some of which prove popular, others less so. Although it isn't possible to guarantee that the full range of choices will always be available until the last servings, we try to calibrate supply and demand as best as we can.

Cultural, medical, ethical, social and economic issues:

We respect the needs of vegetarians and offer a variety of options for them. We keep records of pupils with allergies or with conditions such as diabetes and parents should ensure that the information they provide us is up-to-date. These pupils know what they can and cannot eat when they purchase meals from our canteen and some will bring their own food into school. When parents ask for a particular provision to be made we try to meet such requests to the best of our ability. No genetically modified food is knowingly served to children at St Augustine's. As a Catholic school there are currently no significant cultural or religious sensibilities which we need to address, other than to respect our own Catholic Days of Fasting and Abstinence such as Ash Wednesday when no meat is served. The school has a strong commitment to celebrating human diversity. We ensure that there are always food options suitable for those from other faiths which have dietary laws. Although menus offering South American, Asian and continental dishes are no longer unusual, the fact that these choices are often available at school is a way of literally savouring this diversity. We try to ensure that the prices we charge are reasonable. Pupils on free school meals are processed in a sensitive and low-key manner and even this will be unnecessary when we move over to the new biometric "cashless" system.