Mount Anville
Montessori Junior School
2½ – 12 years

1.0 Introductory Statement

The creation of this ***Healthy Eating Policy*** should be seen in the context of promoting healthy eating habits in the school community. Eating is an important part of everyone's daily life. The relationship between good nutrition, children's ability to learn and the prevention of illness is well established. Healthy eating habits established early in life are a wise investment in the future. The school, in consultation with parents, plays an important role in promoting healthy eating habits among our pupils. This is achieved through our Healthy Eating Programme, Science lessons and through this Healthy Eating Policy.

2.0 Rationale

In the light of concerns in the media in relation to children's diets and the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle, a review of this policy has taken place as it was felt that the importance of healthy eating and healthy lunch boxes needed to be re-emphasised to our pupils. The views of the Sports Committee, teachers and pupils were sought and these are reflected in this document.

3.0 Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

At Mount Anville Montessori Junior School, we believe in providing a healthy atmosphere for all and we encourage all our pupils to act in healthy ways. Thus, in partnership with parents/guardians, we advise and encourage them to eat healthy nutritious lunches. We also provide them with a Nutrition Education Programme thus ensuring that our broad aim of preparing our pupils for lifelong good habits in this area is achieved.

4.0 Aims

This policy aims to:

1. Promote healthy, nutritious, appealing foods in pupils' lunches and discourage foods that are high in fat, sodium and added sugars.
2. Provide class time for Nutrition Education in the context of our Health Programme and through integration with other curricular areas.
3. Highlight the importance of healthy lunches at the beginning of the school year and to become involved in the annual Healthy Eating/Active Week.
4. Discourage teachers from using unhealthy foods to reward pupils.

5. Promote exercise and physical activity and encourage our pupils to become involved in extra-curricular activities.
7. Promote pupils eating lunches where there is a minimum of packaging, thus supporting a clean, litter-free school environment.

5.0 Extra Staffroom Fruit

In the event of a pupil leaving her break time snack or lunch at home, a selection of fruit will be kept in the staff room fridge and can be handed out to pupils if required.

6.0 Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special occasion and girls look forward to celebrating a special treat with their classmates. However, if you decide to send in a birthday treat for your daughter to share with her class, please can you make them small and not something that will end up replacing a pupil's lunch i.e. a small individual bag of jellies or a small individual cupcake is more than enough. Time allowing, it may also be a nice idea if these treats were homemade or something that your daughter could be involved in making. It is not a necessity to visit expensive cake shops. Birthday treats must be handed out at lunchtime and consumed within the classroom, only after the pupil's healthy lunch has been eaten first. Birthday treats are not to be eaten on the yard at break or lunchtime.

7.0 Nuts and Nut Based Spreads

Nuts and nut based spreads are allowed in school. However, if a pupil has a nut allergy, and it is felt that a class ban is required, a letter will go out to parents of that class informing them not to send nuts, or nut based products into school. The annual emergency information form that is filled out by parents/guardian will inform staff members if food allergies or special diets apply to individual children.

9.0 Foods not allowed in school

The following foods are not permitted in school:

- Chocolate – all forms. Including those in cakes, bars, biscuits, cookies and all chocolate coverings.
- Crisps and popcorn – all forms.
- Sweets of any kind including lollipops.
- Frubes and Petit Filous
- Fizzy drinks.
- Concentrated fruit Juice i.e. MiWadi

These items, and any other items considered to be unhealthy will be left in the lunchbox if they are brought to school.

9. Lunchbox Ideas

The ideas below are not exhaustive but only include food items that are both nutritionally sound and encouraged by the school.

CARBOHYDRATES/ENERGY FOODS	▪ Breads etc. (preferably wholemeal) including water biscuits, Ryvita, tortillas, wraps ▪ Rice and cous cous ▪ Soups in a flask ▪ Pasta ▪ Other - plain rice cakes, oatcakes, cereal and dried fruit bars
FRUIT and VEGETABLES	▪ Apple, orange, mandarin, banana, kiwi, pear, plums, strawberries, melon, peach, mango, pineapple, avocado, raspberries, blueberries. ▪ **Grapes if used must be cut in half top to bottom** ▪ Chopped vegetables with dips ▪ Fruit smoothies, must be 100% pure fruit with no added colourings, additives or flavourings (Prep Senior – 6th class only) ▪ Dried fruit ▪ Tomatoes, lettuce, carrot, cucumber, etc.
PROTEIN FOODS	▪ Meats - chicken (plain, turkey, ham,etc) ▪ Fish - tuna,etc ▪ Eggs
DAIRY/CALCIUM FOODS	▪ Milk, yoghurt (Prep Senior – 6th class only) , cheese
ADDITIONAL DRINKS	▪ Water ▪ **Please note that drinking water is available in each of the 4 corridors for the pupils, if needed.**

10.0 Medical Exceptions

Parents/guardians should inform the school (usually on the School Enrolment Form) if their daughter suffers from food allergies e.g. allergy to nuts, dairy and/or if she is a diabetic or coeliac.

The class teacher will advise each child to bring uneaten lunches home so that parents can monitor food eating patterns. If the class teacher, deems it necessary, they will inform the parent/guardian if their child has not eaten well.

11.0 Aftercare Hot Food and Snacks Provided

The weekly dinner menu for Aftercare which is served at 12.45pm, provides children with a variety of nutritional foods. This menu is on display in the Montessori Building on a monthly basis. The emergency form will inform the school if there are dietary requirements. It is also important that the parent lets the Aftercare staff know if the child has particular eating habits. Specific plates and bowls are used that acknowledge the food portion size for the children which are appropriate to the ages of the children. Aftercare also provides snacks in the afternoon, where a variety of healthy foods will be supplied and a monthly list will be on display in the Montessori Department. If a child is hungry between hot meal and snack, then a variety of healthy options are available in the Montessori kitchen.

12.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- All members of the school community are responsible for the successful implementation of this policy.
- Teachers will advise and encourage pupils to eat well. They will deliver the Health Promotion Programme in a planned way and normally during Healthy Eating/Active Week.
- Parents /guardians are asked to cooperate with the policy and pay particular attention to foods and drinks that are allowed not allowed in school. This is the minimum of cooperation that is expected of them.
- Pupils are encouraged to pay attention to the advice and encouragement given to them by their parents and teachers and to make real efforts to eat healthily and exercise.
- The School Sports Coordinator will be appointed to coordinate the implementation of this policy. Where necessary the coordinator will report to staff meetings and consult with parents and pupils on the policy.

12.0 Implementation and Review

This amended policy will be implemented in the school year 2016-2017 and thereafter. It will be reviewed in the school year 2019-2020 or earlier, if required. The review will involve parents, Principal, teachers, Board of Management and pupils. The sports coordinator staff will be responsible in carrying out the review of the policy.

13.0 Ratification and Communication

This original policy was ratified at the Board of Management meeting held in October 2014. A copy of the policy will be made available to all staff and parents/guardians of pupils attending the school. Content will be disseminated to parents at the general Meeting of Parents held every October. A simplified version in poster form will be distributed to all pupils.