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Footprints that last a lifetime!

Fleming Pre-Primary and Early Learning Centre

Sugar Awareness Policy

Purpose

At Fleming Pre-Primary and Early Learning Centre, the health, emotional wellbeing and development of our learners is our highest priority. This Sugar Awareness Policy aims to promote healthy eating habits, support concentration and emotional regulation, and encourage a balanced approach to nutrition in early childhood, in alignment with South African Early Childhood Development (ECD) best practices.

Why Sugar Awareness Matters

Excessive sugar intake in young children has been linked to:

- Mood swings and emotional dysregulation
- Reduced concentration and learning engagement
- Hyperactivity followed by fatigue
- Long-term health concerns including childhood obesity and diabetes

The Department of Basic Education's National School Nutrition Programme Guidelines (2017) emphasize the importance of healthy eating patterns established in early childhood. The South African Food-Based Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting foods and drinks high in sugar to support optimal growth and development.



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As a school, we are committed to creating a calm, nurturing environment where children feel safe, regulated and ready to learn, in accordance with the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2015).

Our Approach

We do not prohibit treats, but we endeavour to actively limit and manage sugar consumption during the school day. Our approach is based on education, balance and partnership with parents, aligned with the principles outlined in the National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (2015).

School Guidelines

To support this policy, we ask parents to please consider the following suggestions:

Lunchboxes & Snacks for school

- Avoid sweets, chocolates, lollipops, marshmallows and sugary baked goods
- Avoid sugary drinks, including juice, flavoured milk and fizzy drinks
- Limit processed snacks high in sugar
- Encourage whole foods such as:
 - Fresh fruit (in line with the Department of Health's "5-a-day" campaign)
 - Plain yoghurt or low-sugar yoghurt
 - Cheese, provitas, wholewheat sandwiches
 - Vegetables with hummus, lower-sugar rusks or muffins
 - Water as the primary beverage



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Birthdays & Celebrations

- We prefer to celebrate birthdays in a low-sugar, inclusive way
- Parents are encouraged to send:
 - Fruit platters
 - Mini muffins (low sugar)
 - Plain cupcakes with minimal icing
 - Popcorn (plain or lightly salted)

Special Events

- On approved special occasions (such as end-of-year concerts or Heritage Day celebrations), limited treats may be offered at the discretion of school management
- These occasions are planned thoughtfully and do not occur regularly

School Responsibility

- Teachers and staff will model healthy eating habits
- No sugary rewards will be used as incentives
- Sugar intake will be monitored during school hours to ensure consistency across classrooms
- Nutrition education will be integrated into our curriculum in age-appropriate ways, supporting the holistic development principles outlined in the National Early Learning and Development Standards (NELDS)



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Parent Partnership

We understand that every family has their own approach to nutrition. This policy is not about restriction, but about supporting children's wellbeing during the school day and in general. Healthy habits build healthy kids. We recognize that parenting is challenging and that nutrition can be complex to navigate. We value open communication and appreciate parents partnering with us in creating healthy foundations for life. We are here to help, guide and support you.

In Closing

By working together, we can help our children develop a positive relationship with food, support emotional regulation, and create an environment where every child can thrive. This approach supports South Africa's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

Thank you for your understanding, support and commitment to your child's wellbeing.

Fleming Management Team

References

Department of Basic Education (2017). *National School Nutrition Programme Guidelines*. Pretoria: DBE.

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