

# St Francis C. of E. Primary School

## Food and Eating – Criterion 6

**Also implementation of safe systems for the arrival and departure of pupils.**

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<b>Healthy School Validation</b>	<b>2002</b>

St Francis C. of E. School is a primary school situated in Falmouth with over 400 pupils. The school co-ordinator is Miriam Burnett and tells us about the work undertaken to achieve the healthy schools award.

Target: To provide drinking water in the classroom setting to impact behaviour and learning throughout the school.

Following the identification of general concerns by staff and parents about the low levels of water consumption by the children the above target was agreed. There are sinks in the classrooms and cloakrooms but no specific arrangements were in force for children to freely access water during the day. Our Healthy Schools Task Group investigated the various options for providing access to water in the classrooms and around the schools water fountains, water machines, bottles, jugs etc. Main considerations were hygiene, convenience, practicalities, safety, installation and cost.

Zoë Challis (a Community Nursery Nurse) visited the school to offer help with our Healthy Schools targets. She discussed the benefit, options and initial problems of introducing this level of water access and shared with us the experience of other local schools. Some of the interesting points she made were:

### **The link between water and improved academic performance**

**Once water consumption increases, visits to the toilet would also increase, but this would settle down after a fortnight, once the bladder had adjusted**  
**The link between drinking insufficient water and the incidence of bed wetting**

We decided to introduce individual bottles with sports tops that can be kept on tables and refilled from the drinking water taps. This started in the summer term 2001 and it soon settled down although there were the few expected initial drawbacks such as frequent use of toilets, and some spills. Additionally a few older children attempted to use their bottles as water pistols at playtime and consternation from staff that some children were spending long periods of time sucking on their bottles as if they were babies' feeding bottles! A questionnaire

was sent to parents and many favourable comments were made, with over 80% of children now bringing water to school. Benefits have been noted by children and staff.

The school cook consulted Initial Catering about providing bottled water at lunchtime and phasing out fizzy drinks. The children can choose from milk, bottled spring water, pure apple juice, pure orange juice and flavoured water and this has proved to be very popular. The emphasis on drinking water has also incidentally impacted on staff and many now drink water rather than the traditional tea or coffee.

Target: to develop healthy eating in the school

At the beginning of our Healthy Schools work the children completed a questionnaire and the results were entered on a spreadsheet and analysed. From this and from observations of the food the children were eating at break time and lunchtime we identified a need to promote healthy eating. We focused on tuck, packed lunches and school dinners.

**Tuck:** after consultation with parents we introduced one 'fruit only' tuck day per week, after a few months we increased this to two days per week and we will be shortly increasing it again. The school kitchen help by selling milk at a subsidised price and portions of fruit at break times. The increase in fruit has the added bonus of reducing litter and we will be starting to use bins to collect waste for composting next term.

**Packed lunches:** following a suggestion from a parent of a child on our Healthy Schools team, we invited children and parents to submit recipes for a 'healthy packed lunch' recipe book. The children added illustration and the book was checked by the Healthy Schools Promotion team prior to publication. In November we held a school Open Evening focusing on the work done by each class relating to specific areas of being a healthy school. The Open Evening included:

- KS1 and KS2 'design a poster' competition illustrating some aspects of good health
- fancy dress competition for KS1 (come dressed as a fruit or vegetable)
- displays of children's work and talk by an outside speaker
- display of healthy options for school lunches by the canteen
- Ready, Steady, Cook competition

The competition was for teams of four from each year group in KS2 to prepare a healthy packed lunch comprising of a savoury item, a dessert and a drink. We had our own 'Ainsley Harriott' giving a running commentary and the judges were the owner and the restaurant manager from a leading Falmouth hotel and the school cook.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the healthy content of many packed lunch boxes and the lunchtime supervisors award stickers to children who eat up their lunches. Children have to take all their rubbish home with them so that their parents know what is being eaten and we have a dinner monitor checking the rubbish bin!

**School dinners:** the school cook is a member of our Healthy School team and has worked closely with us to develop a range of healthy eating options eating for pupils. A questionnaire was sent to parents last year and a suggestion box was put out before the beginning of this term, both requesting ideas for the menus. The cook also visited several other schools to look at menus and ways of reducing choice but still providing food that would appeal to everyone. Some healthy options that have been introduced are:

more rice and pasta  
individual fruit salad dishes  
jacket potatoes with fillings  
more fish  
side salad bowls

We have introduced incentive stickers for children choosing healthy food and the cook has reported that the younger children in particular respond to this: many choosing fresh fruit salad as a dessert in order to gain a sticker. As with packed lunches, children are rewarded for eating their lunches and the waste bin is monitored. The children in the Healthy School team prepared a tally chart of children choosing healthy options that clearly demonstrated the success of the healthy options.

We repeated the questionnaire recently and were pleased to note a significant increase in the children's knowledge of healthy food. Events we have planned for later this term and next term are:

- two year groups visiting Asda to find out about healthy food and then working with students from Penryn College to prepare healthy meals
- 'Meet the Stars' day, planned in conjunction with Falmouth School and another local primary school, when sporting stars will visit the school to meet the children, talk about their achievements and emphasise the necessity for healthy lifestyles, in particular healthy eating.

**Target: Safe systems for arrival and departure of pupils.**

Although the school is fortunate to have a large car park providing parking areas for staff and visitors, some concerns about the use of the car park at the beginning and end of the day had been expressed by children, parents, staff and visitors. The school decided to develop systems for safe arrival at and departure from school by pupils.

Many car drivers, hoping for a speedy departure, were waiting on the route through the car park, thus completely blocking it and preventing access for emergency vehicles and buses and the bus company was considering moving its pick up point to outside the school premises.

In order to highlight the need for changes that would provide emergency access to the school at all times, the fire brigade was invited to take part in a fire drill at the end of afternoon school. Parents were informed that this would be happening at some time during that half term. Following the exercise, the fire brigade submitted a report and the Healthy Schools Team organised an on-site meeting to discuss problems and find possible solutions, inviting the Community Police Officer and representatives from Highways, the bus company and taxi firms. Together we designed a new one-way system that improved the pick-up point for the bus, left an alternative route free for access for emergency vehicles and the bus and enabled children to reach cars, taxis and the bus without leaving the pavement. This meant changing the designated parking areas for staff, visitors, the bus, taxis and disabled drivers. Quotes were obtained from the Highways Agency and the Ground Maintenance Service for painting new markings. Highways provided a higher quote for permanent markings but we chose to take a lower quote for shorter life markings from Ground Maintenance as we envisaged that we might have to change some markings once the new scheme had been trialled.

It was decided that the new system would be introduced at the beginning of the school year. Everyone was informed of the prospective changes at the end of the summer term: parents, staff, the bus company and taxi firms received details and a map. Children from Y6 made a large model of the redesigned car park and free standing road signs to mark speed limit, no entry, bus stop and bus and emergency vehicles only. Pete Keyes from the Highways Department and Safe Routes to Schools had suggested that these would be more effective if produced by the children. The markings were painted during the summer holidays and the children's signs were put out on the first morning.

The changes went smoothly and a questionnaire to parents inviting feedback and most encouraging with an overwhelming majority of parents agreeing that the changes had improved safety for the children. The bus company also responded favourably and emergency access is a great advantage. Although there are still concerns over the small minority of parents who deliberately ignore the new arrangements, the initiative has proved very successful and worthwhile.