



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Nursery
 Headteacher Mr C Beazeley
 Windermere Road, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 2RF
 Phone: 01702 414200
 Email: office@sacredheart.southend.sch.uk



Dear Parents/Carers,

4th November 2024

We hope this letter finds you well. As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of all pupils and as part of our Healthy Schools Award, we would like to provide some important information regarding the drinks and snacks your child brings to school.

Why Water is the Best Drink for Your Child

You may be aware that many schools across the UK have adopted a "water only" policy and there are important health reasons for this.

Dental Health Concerns

Tooth decay is a growing problem among children in the UK. According to a government report, there were nearly 43,000 hospital admissions in 2022 for children aged 0-19 due to tooth decay. This is a preventable condition and one of the biggest contributors is the consumption of sugary drinks like juice, squash, and fizzy drinks.

Even drinks that seem healthy, like fruit juice and smoothies, can be high in free sugars. These are sugars that are added to foods and drinks or are found naturally in honey, syrups, and fruit juices. Free sugars cause tooth decay and contribute to childhood obesity.

The NHS recommends that children aged 4-6 have no more than 19g (about five sugar cubes) of free sugars per day, and children aged 7-10 no more than 24g (about six sugar cubes). Many sugary drinks contain more than this in a single serving!

Snack

Free sugars do not include sugars naturally present in intact fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. A free sugar is any sugar that has been added to food or drink including fruit juice.

The sugars found in fruit, vegetables and milk don't seem to have a negative effect on our health, and they come with extra nutrients, such as fibre. But when fruit is turned into fruit juice, the sugars come out of their cells and become free sugars. The fibre is lost and it's easier to consume extra sugar without realising. You wouldn't eat four oranges in a row but you might drink their juice in one glass of orange juice without feeling full.

The maximum recommended daily amounts of sugar are:

| Age Group | Recommended Daily Amount (Sugars) | Recommended Daily Amount (Grams) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4 to 6 years old | 5 cubes (15 grams) | 19 grams (5 cubes) |
| 7 to 10 years old | 6 cubes (24 grams) | 24 grams (6 cubes) |
| 11 and older | 7 cubes (30 grams) | 30 grams (7 cubes) |

Images shown: A packet of 'Fruit Flakes' and a green smoothie bag with a '4' on it.

Choices Matter Too

Just as sugary drinks can be harmful, pre-packaged snacks can also be high in hidden sugars, fats, and salts. Snacks like fruit-flavoured yoghurts, fruit "yo-yos" and "winders" and cereal bars often contain more free sugars than you might expect. While these snacks seem like a good option, they are far less healthy than whole fruit.

What Are Free Sugars?

Free sugars are the types of sugar added to food or found naturally in things like fruit juices, honey, and syrups. They are not the sugars found naturally in whole fruits or vegetables. This is because the cell's structure changes as fruit is mashed, pureed and juiced. These sugars can cause harm when consumed in large amounts, contributing to tooth decay, weight gain, and other health issues.

Headteacher: Mr C Beazeley
 Part of the Assisi Catholic Trust Ltd,
 Registered address: Kenilworth Gdns, Leigh on Sea, Essex SSO 0BW
 Registered in England. Company No 07696989



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Adding it Up

If you added the sugar in a fruit smoothie and a yoghurt together this would be the equivalent to 6 sugar cubes which is a 7-10 year old's daily allowance.



Healthy Snack Ideas

The best snack options are whole fruits and vegetables. Fruits like apples, pears, bananas, and satsumas are naturally sweet and provide essential vitamins, fibre, and energy without the harmful effects of free sugars.

If you're concerned about the cost, there are many affordable options:

- Look for **seasonal fruit**, which is often cheaper and fresher.
- Check for offers on **wonky fruit and veg**, which is often reduced in price but just as nutritious.
- Keep an eye out for **reduced-to-clear** sections in supermarkets for bargains on fresh produce.
- **Frozen fruit and tinned fruit** can be an economical option as it has a long shelf life and retains its nutritional value.
- A **multipack of crisps** costs roughly the same as a **6-pack of satsumas**.
- When choosing crisps, opt for options that are 100 calories or less per serving, and avoid "grab bags," as they typically contain more than one portion.

But what about cost?

But what about cost?

Aldi

Tesco

Asda

Aldi

Tesco

Asda

The screenshot shows a comparison of prices for various products across Aldi, Tesco, and Asda. Products include Snackrite crisps, Stockwell's crisps, ASDA Meaty Variety Crisps, Nature's Pick crisps, ASDA Salt & Vinegar crisps, ASDA Meaty Variety Flavour crisps, ASDA Soft Cheese, Tesco Whole Large Cucumber, Nightingale Farms Cherry Tomatoes, ASDA Garden Gang Super Early Peppers, ASDA Garden Gang 7 Brilliant Bananas, and Rosodene Farms Small Apples. Prices are listed as of Friday 9th August 2024.

Resources for Healthy Choices

For more ideas on healthy drinks and snacks, and reducing your family's sugar intake, visit

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these useful websites:

- **NHS – Water, Drinks and Nutrition:** [NHS Website](#)
- **NHS Food Scanner (found on the app store on your phone)**
- **Eatwell Guide:** [The Eatwell Guide - NHS](#)
- **Healthier Families:** [Healthier Families - Home - NHS](#)
- **Simply Veg:** [Simply Veg](#)

These websites provide easy-to-follow advice on how to make healthier choices, including simple swaps you can make for drinks and snacks that your children will love.

Health4Life

The Health4Life Team at Southend Council supports families strive towards a healthier lifestyle. The team offers support to families on a 1:1 basis, through group programs and workshops, and can provide advice on healthier swaps, fussy eating and support for children above a healthy weight range.

Next Health4Life Program: (including 1 hour information session, snack & 1 hour physical activity session delivered by SPSSA)

Every Tuesday 4-6pm for 6 weeks starting 5th November @ Thorpedene School

Every Wednesday 4-6pm for 6 weeks starting 6th November @ Westborough School

Parent Workshops:

Healthy Lunchbox Online Session

11th November 5pm-6pm

[Click Here](#) to register

Fussy Eating Online Session

18th November 5pm-6pm

[Click Here](#) to register

To get in touch with the Health4Life Team for support or to register for one of the programs, please call: 01702 534843 or email mseicb-s.health4life@nhs.net

Our School's Policy

To promote better health and wellbeing for all our students, we kindly ask that children bring **water only** to school and choose healthy snacks like whole fruits or vegetables. Please avoid sending sugary drinks, crisps, or pre-packaged snacks high in sugar or salt.

Thank you for supporting us in creating a healthy environment for all children.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs May

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