

NEW DAY SCHOOL FOOD POLICY

Date of Revised Policy implementation: 01/09/05

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Aim

New Day School is a Neo-Humanist pre-school. The essence of Neo-Humanism is a dedication to the holistic development of the mind, body, heart and spirit, through the cultivation of creative forces, intellectual faculties, ethical values and intuition of the individuals that practice it; with the goal of respectful & loving service to all beings of this universe. All the policies of the school are formed keeping Neo-Humanism as a guiding principle. New Day School Food Policy is developed by the founders and members of the parent organization, Ananda Marga, over the last 28 years. Its aim is to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in school promote health and well-being of children, staff parents & other volunteer members of New Day School.

Rationale

New Day School's food policy reflects a holistic approach of developing body, mind, heart and spirit by practicing the ancient "Yogic" concepts of-

- ☞ Diet: **Áhárashuddhao sattvashudhih** ["A sentient diet produces a sentient body"]
- ☞ Ethics: Ahimsa [Non-Violence]:- First principle of Yama-Niyama. Neo-Humanist education advocates the ten principles of human ethics known as Yama & Niyama.

According to Yoga Philosophy, this universe is composed of vibrations of energy with different frequencies. These vibrations or energy forces are categorized as:

- ☞ Sentient: Force of Self-awareness, Love, Peace, Purity and Joy
- ☞ Mutative: Force of restless Movement, activity or change
- ☞ Static: Force of dullness, inertia, decay and death

When any one of these vibrational flows, or energy forces, predominates in any object or creature, it will manifest the qualities of that force primarily. Yoga sages observed the deep connection between human mind and body and the effects of these three forces upon it.

According to the sages human mind is the unit microcosm plus the collection of the minds of the cells in our body. Our physical body is the collection of countless cells and these cells generally grow of light, air, water and the food we eat. Our psychic body is also influenced by these cells.

After long experimentation with different foods on their own bodies they found out that the intrinsic nature of food and drink has its effect upon the cells, and consequently also influences the human mind. Thus they characterized foods into the following three categories, corresponding to the three forces which are operating simultaneously everywhere in the universe, in all entities.

1. **Sentient food:** All foods that are beneficial to both body and mind are considered sentient. Examples of sentient food are all kinds of grains, legumes, fruits, nuts, milk and milk products.
2. **Mutative food:** Any food that is beneficial to the body but is neutral to the mind, or vice versa, but certainly not harmful for the mind, is mutative. Ex. tea, coffee, hot spices, carbonated drinks, chocolate etc.
3. **Static food:** Food which is harmful for the mind and may or may not be good for the body is static. Onion, garlic, wine, stale and rotten food, meat, fish, eggs, alcohol, mushrooms, etc., are static.

We believe that by offering sentient- nutritious choices in food we are growing not just healthy bodies but healthy individuals. We want our children to experience sentient force of Love, self-awareness and peace through the school environment and the food they eat here.

Our policy completes the following:

- * Ensures equality of access and participation for all.
- * Ensures the consistency between the formal requirement of nutrients in daily diet for a child and school food and drink provision.
- * Ensures greater sustainability through planned action as part of the school's development plan, including provision from food collection and garden as well as staff training to meet its aims.
- * Communicates our school's shared vision, ethics and values to children, parents and members of the wider community.

Objectives

The New Day School's food policy reflects our practice of Neo-Humanism in the curriculum. It is developed by a steering group of people who practice and believe in those ethics and values. This group continues to assess the extent and the provision of food and drink related issues in the school. Providing nutritious food to the children and staff for their all-round health is one of our key objectives. We can summarize our food curriculum as "Healthy body and mind through a sentient diet". The policy Making group of NDS wants the school community to make educated and informed decisions about what the community eats and drinks for its general well-being. Our School had been lacto-vegetarian since 1979 and became fully vegan in 2005. This

decision was taken as an active step against cruelty to animals in the dairy industry. Thus NDS wants to promote a healthy diet with minimal harm to the eco-system. Sustainability is a core value of the group. Producing organic fruits, vegetables in the school garden, local farm & food donations from various sources are some of the active steps to achieve sustainability. Thus we are constantly working towards maintaining the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the school.

The New Day School's policy making group has initiated the following guidelines, based on Neo-Humanistic principles.

Guidelines:

As NDS food policy is based on the concept of sustainability with minimal harm to the eco-system, we offer only Vegan option to the children in our school. A thorough research has been done in nutrition and available vegan alternatives to be able to meet the standard dietary requirements.

Drinks and Water

The water available for drinking in the school is filtered and filled into the jugs in the kitchen where staff and children have access to water during teaching and learning. Our staff serve water to the children as per their needs. During the outside play time, water filled in pitchers is kept on the outside patio for teachers and children. Fizzy or flavoured drinks are not permitted during periods of teaching and learning, and are discouraged at all other times.

Food-based Requirements for School Lunches and Snack times

We offer wholesome **VEGAN** (No Animal Products) snacks and a hot lunch everyday. Our menus focus on a balance of whole grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, with healthy morning and afternoon snacks. Every dish is carefully prepared by hand and we focus on maintaining the integrity of the nutrients found naturally in the foods we serve. **We do not include ONION, GARLIC, MUSHROOMS AND ANY FORM OF ANIMAL PRODUCT INCLUDING MILK & HONEY** in the foods prepared in or bought for the school.

MENU

Menu display on the board: Our menus focus on a balance of whole grains, legumes and vegetables, with healthy morning and afternoon snacks. Weekly menu display is to be found at the message boards for parents. We do get plenty of food donations from various sources. Thus based on the donations, menus could be different than on display.

The following components are on our menus:-

More fruit and vegetables: No less than four servings per day per child. For snack at least one serving of fruits or vegetables. For lunch at least two servings of vegetables or fruits or salad. We encourage our children to eat more fruits and vegetables. Thus the cook is required to make the menus with appealing combinations of fruits and veggies.

Protein based foods: Daily requirement of protein is met by offering either legumes, nuts or soy based foods.

Carbohydrates: All starch based foods are exclusively made from whole grains.

Sweeteners: We use organic unrefined sugar, agave syrup & maple syrup as sweeteners for our baked goods.

Oils/butter alternative: Only organic oils or butter alternatives are used in the food made in NDS kitchen. For the most part we offer low fat nutritious menu to the children.

Drinking water: fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Healthier Drinks: The only drinks served should be water, pure fruit juices, Soy/rice milk. No Fizzy drinks or milk based drinks or sugary drinks are allowed in the school premises.

These foods are NOT ALLOWED on the school premises:-

Foods with, meat, fish, eggs, onion, garlic, mushrooms, & any form of animal products

Peanuts: Due to their extreme allergy potential peanuts in any form are not allowed in the school premises.

GMO foods: are strictly banned on the school premises

Confectionary: Confectionary such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets as well as candies and other only- sugar sweets should not be available for lunch or snacks.

Foods with restricted use

Processed foods as snacks: We encourage our kitchen staff to serve the children healthy wholesome snacks made from scratch. Occasionally we do serve processed food as snacks but that option is only in case of emergency. We insist upon having organic processed food in that case.

No salt and restricted condiments: Salt should not be available at lunch. Condiments such tomato sauce or salad dressings are offered according to the need of the menu.

Deep-fried foods: We do not offer deep fried foods in NEW DAY. In case of special occasions like fund raising or other functions we may offer such foods.

Non-organic foods: For the most part of the year we use only organic foods in our kitchen, however due to the scarcity & high prices of the veggies and fruits in the months of May-June we do buy some of those foods non-organic.

Food-based Requirements for snack times:

Our criterion for snack time is as above. All the snacks made in the kitchen are from scratch. A range of seasonal fresh fruit is always available. The combination for snack is- fruit or veggies +grain + water/soy / rice milk.

Snack Machines and Soft Drinks Machines

The school does not have any snack machines or soft drinks machines.

Food Allergies or Medical Needs

Given all the above, within our policy we recognize that for some students there are medical reasons why certain food items may not be tolerated by them therefore we make arrangements to substitute those items with the food that is agreeable to their condition. The names of the children with food allergies are posted on the kitchen, class & office boards. All teachers and kitchen staff are informed about the children with food allergies in advance before the school session begins. Common food alternatives are made available by the school and special items are provided by the parents.

The Dining Area and School Meals

We have designated a dining space in the classrooms to create a home environment for the children. This helps them to enjoy their lunch and snacks just as they would at home. We offer a vegan meal and two snacks to the children and the staff everyday.

The Curriculum

The School endeavours to implement its food policy where it can within its formal curriculum. At present the main curriculum areas concerned with this are:

1. *Physical Education.* As part of Physical Education we teach our children healthy eating as part of their understanding of exercise and fitness.
2. *Gardening & Nature Study:* We are blessed with a large vegetable and herbs garden on our grounds. With food grown in our own school gardens, not only do our students benefit from these nutritious foods but they are

- able to learn first hand where food comes from and how it is grown. In effect, we are cultivating an environment where students are able to understand the relationships between food, humans and the environment.
3. *Moral Education:* As a part of our moral education we bring non- harming principle to our children's attention by being vegan.
 4. Social awareness: introducing various ethnic foods from time to time helps them to be aware of the other cultures existing in the human society.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the New Day School's Managing Body & Kitchen Co-ordinator to monitor, evaluate and refresh the policy as needed. The above policy will be reappraised in the light of developments and changes in the school. We recognise that new targets will need to be set or effort moved to new priorities and changes. We will continue to encourage our school community to give their valuable input to improve the policy as and when possible.

Notes

This policy document was produced in consultation with NDS Board Members and the office co-ordinators. This school actively supports healthy eating and drinking throughout the school day.