

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement:

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme our school actively encourages the children to become more aware of the need to eat healthily both at home and within school hours. Children learn to know how to maintain health and well being by choosing to eat a balanced diet. Children become familiar with the food pyramid and the quality and category of the food they choose to eat as they progress through the 'Taking care of my body' strand of the SPHE Programme from Junior Infants to Sixth class. Children are included in the task of filling lunch boxes with healthy food along with the guidance and encouragement of their parents.

Rationale:

The school community provides a forum to promote healthy eating reaching out to parents, teachers, pupils and families. This policy is a guide to safe and healthy eating for the school.

Aims and Objectives:

1. Promote nutritional awareness
2. Positively effect healthy eating among school going children
3. Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food
4. Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children which is hoped will become lifelong habits
5. Protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.

In this school two lunch breaks are time-tabled:

- A ten minute break: 10.50-11.00 am
- A thirty minute break: 12.30- 1.00 pm

Sos Beag: Children eat a small item of lunch e.g. a sandwich / piece of fruit in the yard or in the classroom weather permitting.

Younger children are allowed some class time to eat indoors before going to play. This is particularly important during the first term of the Junior Infant year as these children eat more slowly.

Am Lóin: Children are given a 15 minute time period to commence their lunch before going out to play. Children are not allowed to walk around the room when eating lunch to prevent spillages and also to promote good eating etiquette.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch which helps maintain their level of concentration throughout the day. A healthy lunch should,

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if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid. These are: Bread, cereals,
Fruit, fruit juice and vegetables,
Milk, cheese, yogurt,
Meat, chicken, fish and alternatives

Healthy Lunch

Children are taught the importance of good hygiene when handling food and so the sharing of food utensils or drink bottles is discouraged. We ask that all containers are labelled with the child's name to facilitate good hygiene practices.

Many children have food allergies and so we encourage parents to make the school aware of such allergies immediately to prevent any allergic reactions. The children within a child's class who suffers from an allergy are made aware of the child's allergy. In the case of severe allergies the school population are aware of the allergy and a school wide ban on that food may be implemented where necessary to ensure the child's safety.

Friday is 'treat day'...that means that a child is permitted to bring one treat in her lunch box on Friday. Treats are not permitted on other days. To improve dental health parents and children are encouraged to provide a tooth friendly treat on Fridays.

Due to the prevalence of food allergies, and the wish of many parents to promote healthy eating habits with their children, **the provision of treats for a class to mark an occasion or a birthday cake can no longer be facilitated by the school.**

*****Nut Ban:**

As there are children in our school with severe nut allergies, nuts or any product containing nuts: eg Nutella, peanut butter, some yogurts, cereal bars, biscuits or bars containing nuts are strictly not allowed.

****Fizzy drinks, crisps, popcorn, nuts, chewing gum, lollipops and glass bottles and cans are not permitted in school.***

Children form their eating habits for life from an early age so parents and teachers have a lasting influence by starting them on the right road. Eating habits influence a child's chances of a healthy life. Some lunches can be low in fibre and high in fat and sugar. Substitute high fat and sugar foods with fruit or vegetable alternatives. Cereal bars are high in sugar content.

Lunch is a key meal each day and should provide children with lots of energy. The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children. We wish to thank parents, children, teachers and The Parents

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Association for their cooperation and efforts in maintaining a healthy eating policy within the school.

Wrappings:

As part of our Green Schools campaign all wrappings are brought home in the child's lunch box. Environmentally friendly wrappings are encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle within the school. All children need a sturdy lunch box which they are able to open and close for themselves. This develops independence and enjoyment during lunch time.



Breads and Cereals:

Bread, bread rolls, bread sticks, flour tortillas(wraps)...preferably wholemeal or brown, Foccacia bread, Naan bread, pancakes, Ciabatta bread, Pitta bread, Bagels or Soda bread.

Wholegrain rice / rice salad or pasta / pasta salad, rice cakes, oat cakes, Potato salad

Scones preferably wholemeal or fruit,

Fruit and Vegetables:

Apples, bananas, mandarins, orange segments, peach, plums, pineapple chunks, grapes, fruit salad, dried fruit, cucumber, sweetcorn, raw carrot, tomato and coleslaw, salad and or salad sandwiches,

Vegetable soup, smoothies, bean salad,

Savouries:

Chicken, turkey, beef or pork meat

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Lean meats: ham, chicken, pepperoni,

Tinned fish eg tuna, sardines

Cheese (sliced/ grated / cubed / cream), cheese triangles, cheese strings, fromage frais,

Quiche, egg,

Friday Treats:

fairy buns, plain digestive biscuits, fruit, Madeira cake, sugar free cereal bars,

Drinks: always use a re-sealable bottle / flask for your school drink

Water, milk, yogurt, soup, fruit juices and sugar free squashes.

Water and milk are the two healthiest drinks for school going children.

Milk:

Growing children should get approx one pint of milk per day or its equivalent in cheese, yogurt and other dairy products. This ensures that children have a sufficient intake of Calcium which is essential for healthy bones and teeth.

Curricular initiatives to promote healthy eating both within the school, at home and within the broader community.

Food and nutrition is an integral part of our **SPHE** (Social, personal and Health Education) Programme within each class level. The development of awareness and good habits with regard to nutrition is developed in a spiral way from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

Class	Strand: Myself	Strand Unit: Taking Care of my body	Curriculum Statement
Junior & Senior Infants Food and nutrition	1. Become aware of the importance of food for growth and development 2. Explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet 3. Discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food 4. Realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat		p.17 Developing Knowledge Skills Values and Attitudes
First and second Food and nutrition	1. Basic hygiene skills 2. Sense of responsibility 3. What is needed to maintain health, 4. Conversation including a balanced diet 5. The purpose and effect of substances we take into our body 6. Explore the importance of food for promoting growth keeping healthy and providing energy 7. Appreciate that balance, regularity and moderation are necessary in the diet 8. Identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources 9. Recognise and practise good hygiene when		p.27

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	dealing with food	
<p>Third and Fourth</p> <p>Food and nutrition</p>	<p>Numbers 1-5 above plus:</p> <p>6. How infection spreads</p> <p>7. Differentiate between a healthy and an unhealthy diet and appreciate the role of balance and moderation</p> <p>8. Recognise the wide choice of food available and categorise food into the four main food groups and their place on the food pyramid</p> <p>9. Examine the dietary needs of his/her own age group and other groups in society</p> <p>10. Explore some factors that influence the consumption of different food products</p> <p>Discuss and examine the importance of proper food hygiene</p>	<p>p. 39, 40</p>
<p>Fifth and Sixth</p> <p>Food and nutrition</p>	<p>Numbers 1-6 above plus:</p> <p>7. Appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy</p> <p>8. Realise and accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet</p> <p>Recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet and the food products in which they are found</p> <p>10. Explore the factors that influence food choices</p> <p>11. Explore and examine some of the illness particularly associated with food intake or special health conditions</p> <p>12. Become aware of the importance of hygiene and care in the preparation and use of food.</p>	<p>p. 55-57</p>

To help highlight awareness of school lunches the following will take place:

- The National Dairy Council 'Healthy Eats for Midday Feasts' will be displayed in each classroom. Junior Infant, new pupils and third class are issued with this each September.
- A poster of the food pyramid will be displayed in each classroom during September and will be referred to by the teachers.
- At the beginning of each school term teachers will discuss healthy eating.
- Healthy eating information will be given to the children through the dental nurse class visit.

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- Children will make healthy lunches in class during the healthy eating awareness week each September.
- A 'fun event' to highlight healthy lunches including artwork, cookery, drama or poster competitions at the start of the school year.
- Teachers will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.

To sustain our healthy eating policy throughout the year we will:

- Highlight the positive aspects of individual lunches in the classroom
- Discuss the contents of school lunches in class
- Praise and affirm the efforts of the children and their parents
- Take special note and praise the owner of a lunch which improves and becomes more healthy
- Remind both parents and children of our policy throughout the year in newsletters
- Inform all new staff of our policy
- Provide all staff with a policy
- Inform all parents and children who are new to our school
- Place particular emphasis on the school lunch in Junior and Senior Infant classes to develop healthy eating from a young age
- Link with The Parents Association to promote healthy eating on Sports Day with fruit platters and bottled water to keep the athletes active.
- Give parents of Junior Infants tips and suggestions on appropriate portion sizes

Useful Information:

The health Promotion Unit has information on nutrition and diet:

www.healthpromotion.ie

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has information and suggestions: www.indi.ie

The Voluntary health Insurance website has a section on school lunches:

www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-011.jsp

Inclusions:

Primary Curriculum Support Programme(PCSP)

- Taking care of my body Junior Infants-Sixth Class
- Taking care of my body integrated across the curriculum
Junior Infants –Sixth Class

