



Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S.
Ballyduff, Tralee, Co. Kerry

Policy for Healthy Eating

	Date
Staff Consultation	SEPTEMBER 2024
Parental Consultation	SEPTEMBER 2024

Introductory Statement

For several years we have been active in raising the pupil's awareness of the importance of healthy eating. This policy was therefore a natural progression from this, where all teaching staff were involved in the formulation of our Healthy Eating Policy.

Rationale

Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of children and as such is part of the holistic education that we advocate in our school. As a health promotion school, we strive to encourage a healthy lifestyle amongst our pupils.

Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

- Promote nutrition awareness
- To develop positive and responsible attitudes to eating in our school community
- Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food
- Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which is hoped will become lifelong habits
- Protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.

Healthy Lunch

Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch, which helps to maintain their level of concentration in the classroom throughout the day. A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the Food Pyramid. These are:

- Bread and Cereals
- Fruit, Fruit Juice and Vegetables

- Milk, Cheese and Yogurt
- Meat, Chicken, Fish and Alternatives

A healthy lunch might be a cheese or tuna sandwich, yogurt, some fruit and a drink of water, milk or fruit juice for example. Healthy snacks may include fruit, chopped vegetables, salad, rice cakes, crackers, small packets of raisins or dried fruit etc.

A selection of leaflets on healthy eating are available for parents and are on display on our Health Promotion notice board.

Our annual Healthy Eating Week, co-ordinated by the Health Promotion Teacher, is used to raise parents' awareness of the importance of healthy eating and they are informed of activities taking place in the school. The display of posters, leaflets, food pyramid and the introduction of outside speakers are some of the activities that may take place during our Healthy Eating Week.

Prohibited Foods

In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children in school the following foods are prohibited

- Crisps, sugary sweets, biscuits and chocolate bars
- Fizzy drinks
- Chewing gum
- For health and safety reasons, the class teacher needs to be informed if a child needs to take throat lozenges/cough sweets at school.
- Although cereal bars are not prohibited, we encourage parents to only include them occasionally and to opt for the high protein, less sugary variety.
- Popcorn needs to be home made.

Lunch Time Guidelines

In order to promote the health and safety of all children in the school and prevent the spread of infection, guidelines for eating at lunch and break times are necessary.

- Children are not encouraged to swap food or drink.
- Children are not to share food utensils or drinks containers.
- It may be necessary to introduce additional precautions or restrictions in classes in which some children have serious allergies.
- Children eat their lunch, while supervised, in the classroom and are not to bring food into the playground.
- Children have permission to drink water if necessary during class time.

Allergies

Parents/Guardians are asked to inform the school of any food allergy that their child may have on their enrolment form. A list of children with food allergies is given to each class teacher and a copy is on display in the office. Each class teacher will inform themselves, by speaking with the parent/guardian of the child, in relation to

precautions, symptoms, and action to be taken if a child in their class does have an allergic reaction.

Implementation

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home, and to eat an alternative food from their lunch.

If a child persists in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher will meet with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy and suggest alternative food choices.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches, which do not include any of the prohibited foods and if possible include variety.
- Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch and not share or trade food, drink or treats with others.
- Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits.
- The whole school community - staff, parents/guardians and children – will work together to promote the progress of this policy. All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on its performance, which will be reported back as appropriate to the Principal and staff.
- The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated if necessary during our annual Healthy Eating Week and through staff meetings.

Success Criteria

We will know if the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and during other break times
- The feedback from parents/guardians and school staff
- The level of concentration and performance of children in the class room

Useful Information:

The Health Promotion Unit provides information on food and nutrition for children and is available to download at: www.healthpromotion.ie

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch boxes: www.indi.ie