

■ Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated following consultation with members of staff and discussion with class pupils.

■ Rationale

It was decided to focus on this area for development in order to improve the pupils' eating habits and thus increase awareness of their own health. Our SPHE / Science and PE programmes endorse this view:

SPHE

- Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition
(Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class Making choices (*See Teacher Guidelines, pp 11-13*))

SCIENCE STRAND

- Living Things: Strand Unit: Myself: Human Life Processes
(Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class) (*See Teacher Guidelines p.10-11*)

P.E.

- Encompassing all strand units

■ Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In accordance with our aim to develop the pupils to the best of their ability so that they achieve their potential, we see ourselves as having a role in the process of enabling pupils to increase control over their eating habits and thus improve their health.

■ Aims

Ideally, we hope:-

- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet
- To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition
- To raise levels of concentration within class by way of consumption of healthy food
- To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons etc.
- To enable the children to develop healthy eating habits for life.
- To foster an awareness and an appreciation of the value of preparing one's own food as opposed to an over-dependency on processed foods.
- To increase pupils' awareness of reading the wrapper to establish and compare the nutritional value of food products.

The current practice is –

Healthy eating Monday through Friday - a small treat is allowed on Fridays (e.g. a mini-bar, biscuit or bun)

Definition

A healthy lunch is a recommended mix of items from the food pyramid. ***Foods from the top tier of the food pyramid should not be included in your child's lunchbox.***

Children study the food pyramid in class during SPHE. In recent years great progress has been made by many pupils in our ***water only*** initiative with as many as 90% of some classes drinking water only. With your help as parents we hope to extend this to 100%.

Drinks :

- Water
- Milk
- Homemade juices,
- Home flavoured water.

Healthy eating Monday through Friday
A small treat is allowed on Fridays e.g. a mini-bar, biscuit or bun

* As plastic is the World's Number One waste pollutant we are aiming to become a plastic bottle free school by Christmas 2018. To help us to achieve our goal pupils will be asked to use re-useable containers for safety and litter reasons.

Cans and glass bottles are not permitted.

Suggestions for a healthy lunchbox:

- Sandwiches or rolls with cheese, meat, tuna, egg or other fillings
- Pitta bread, wraps, crackers, crispbread, rye/vita, rice cakes(plain), pretzels
- Fruit (peeled and chopped for small children)
- Raisins
- Pasta, rice, couscous
- Salad Small, plain biscuits (no chocolate)
- Yoghurt (easy to open)
- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, peppers, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, mangetout etc.)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Plain rice cakes.
- Wholemeal, fruit/plain scones.

The following foods do not support a healthy lunch policy and should be excluded from your child's lunch box:

crisps, chewing gum, sweets ,bars including cereal bars, cakes, lollipops, chocolate, winders, coated rice cakes, crispie buns and especially peanuts and nut products.

N.B. Coated bars are not healthy

Please note

- It isn't possible to include everything but foods which are high in sugar, colourings and additives are bad for one's teeth and one's health and should be avoided.
- In the interests of best practice and fairness to all pupils, birthday parties/cakes cannot be accommodated in school.

** Children should never share their lunches (owing to allergies etc.). **

Due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils, we ask you to be vigilant in the following:-

- ✚ Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
- ✚ Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts such as Nutella, nut based breads and cereal/health bars containing nuts or labelled "may contain nut traces" in school lunches.

Promotion of the Policy

All members of the teaching staff promote this policy through regular verbal reminders and good example to the children.

If children bring "discouraged" food / drinks to school:

- They will be allowed to eat/drink them, but warned not to bring them on other days. If they persist in bringing unhealthy food to school, the teacher will inform parents re Healthy Eating Policy throughout the school.

Exceptions:

Exceptions are allowed:

- End of term parties
- School trips
- School events – concerts, matches, etc.
- Friday treat

■ Success Criteria

We will know that the policy is effective when healthy eating has become a habit for all pupils.
Children observed around the school will be eating only healthy food/drinks (except on Fridays).

■ Roles and Responsibility

This policy was developed by the principal in consultation with staff members. It is implemented by parents and supported by the teaching staff.
Teachers give good example through their own healthy eating habits.

■ Timeframe for Implementation

This policy will be implemented from January 2017

■ Responsibility for Review

The principal in consultation with staff members

■ Ratification and Communication

This policy will be ratified yearly by the Board of Management