

Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh, Laytown, Co Meath A92E273



Healthy Eating Policy – 2026 Review

Introductory Statement

We have set about reviewing the school's Healthy Eating Policy as part of Social, Personal and Health Education and Physical Education. This Healthy Eating Policy outlines how the school supports healthy eating practices through the promotion of healthy lunches and healthy snacks and by other means. The SPHE Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects. We are committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life.

Rationale

This Healthy School Policy aims to promote the development of the whole child, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Our school recognises that a healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting children's health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development.

We will also take part in the Food Dudes Programme each year.

Aims

We hope to achieve by having a healthy eating policy:

- A whole school approach to healthy eating in school, in relation to the culture and environment, curriculum, policy and planning, relationships and partnerships.
- Promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum.

- Ensure that food provision in school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.(Vincent de Paul, Hot Meals initiative).
- Make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience

Objectives

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
2. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. This is why we will endeavour to provide the healthiest lunches we can for the pupils. We promote the use of reusable water bottles for refilling from our filtered water taps in each classroom as our drink option for lunch and breaks.

However, we cannot stress enough the importance of the children getting a good breakfast each morning before they come to school. In our Nurture Club we will provide toast using bread which is a mixture of the best of both white and brown bread. Water is provided some mornings. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious snacks/lunches for your children. Children are encouraged not to share lunches in school. Also, this school is a “Nut Product” due to allergies in the school.

Bread & Alternatives	Savouries
Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal Rice – wholegrain Pasta – wholegrain Potato Salad Wholemeal Scones Bread sticks Crackers Pitta bread Wraps Rice cakes Pancakes Oatcakes Bagels	Lean Meat e.g. Chicken/Turkey Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines Cheese Vegetarian Sausage Beans Chickpeas
Fruit & Vegetables	Drinks
Fruit & Berries	Water

Seedless grapes cut

Cucumber

Sweetcorn

Tomato

Coleslaw

Peppers

Carrot/celery sticks

Broccoli florets

Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame etc.)

Milk

For more healthy lunch ideas click on the link.

<https://www.healthpromotion.ie/products/healthy-food-for-life>

We ask that the following are NOT brought to school:

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

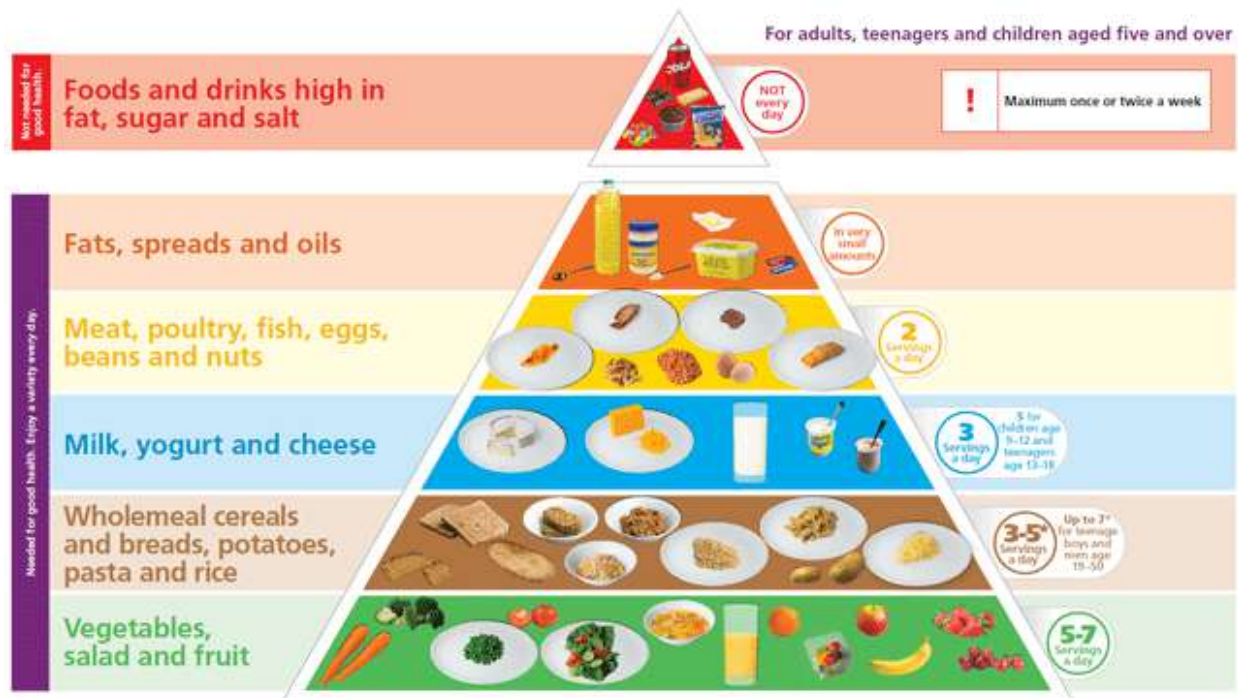
- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Sugary drinks (including cordial, fizzy fruit-flavoured water, fruit juices, etc)
- Nut products including Nutella
- Sweets
- Eggs or Egg mayo
- Biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Take away foods – burgers/ hot dogs/ chips/ wedges / hash browns/ fried chicken (high in fat)/sausage rolls
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn
- Lollipops
- Cans or glass bottles- for obvious health and safety risks

This list is not exhaustive.

If such foods are brought to school, children will be asked to bring them home in their lunchboxes.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes using the rewards that come with the Food Dudes program or in line with our school's reward system.

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:



Treat Day

The last Friday of each month is our treat day to celebrate our anti-bullying policy, zero tolerance of bullying. The children are encouraged to eat the treat after their lunch is eaten or during their Bí Cinéalta Anti-Bullying lesson. On this day, children can bring ONE of the following:

- Treat/ fun sized bar or jellies
- Treat/ fun sized bag of sweets
- Small biscuit
- Small home bakes

On a treat day teachers may give treats to their own class. These are special occasions such as:

- *End of term parties*
- *Halloween*
- *School trips and events*
- *Award at Assembly*

We will try and encourage the use of Healthy Rewards instead of sweets and treats. The following is a list of alternatives that could be used. **Rewarding good behaviour with food contradicts the messages given as part of the curriculum.**

Food rewards can interfere with *children learning to eat in response to hunger and encourages them to eat when they are not hungry. It also encourages eating outside normal meal times and can contribute to tooth decay. Social rewards which involve attention, praise or thanks are often more highly valued than food. Asking children to come up with alternatives to food rewards will give you lots of ideas.*

Recognition	
<i>Certificates or sticker acknowledging a 'great job'</i>	<i>Photo recognition board in a prominent place in the school</i>
<i>Recognise achievement on the noticeboard, website or through school announcements.</i>	<i>Phone call or note to parents</i>
Privileges	
<i>Choose a class activity</i>	<i>Teaching the class</i>
<i>Helping teacher/ member of staff</i>	<i>Making deliveries to the office</i>
<i>Extra play time</i>	<i>Designing a class bulletin board</i>
<i>Homework pass</i>	<i>Reading school announcements</i>
<i>Show and tell time</i>	<i>Sitting on a special chair or beanbag</i>
Rewards for the class	
<i>Golden time (30 mins given at the start of the week, class can earn or loose time according to their behaviour)</i>	<i>A book read aloud to the class</i>
<i>Listening to music during lunch</i>	<i>Playing a game or doing puzzles together (Earn letters to spell game day, after letters are earned they can play board games or have extra PE time)</i>
<i>Dancing or physical activity time</i>	<i>Eating lunch or class time outdoors</i>
Stationary, sports gear, toys	
<i>Frisbees</i>	<i>Skipping ropes</i>
<i>Stickers</i>	<i>Marbles</i>
<i>Step counters</i>	<i>Pencils</i>
<i>Stencils/stamps</i>	<i>Colouring books</i>

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. These are essential and therefore mandatory:

- *Children are not to share food or drink.*
- *Children are not to share food utensils or drinks containers.*
- *Any uneaten food goes back into the child's lunch box or bag- the parent/guardian will be aware of what their child is actually eating (Green Schools initiative).*

We would also encourage that:

- All containers are labelled with the child's name
- As far as practicable, lunches are eaten in one place within the classroom. It is important to note that the health and safety of children with serious allergies will take precedence over other issues. It may, therefore, be necessary to introduce additional precautions or restrictions in classes in which some children have serious allergies.

Allergies

In order to protect children who have serious food allergies, the whole school community will work together to implement age appropriate, responsible measures to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction. All children in the school will be made aware of the implications of food allergies and how they can assist in preventing allergic reactions.

Health Care Plan

If your child has a serious food allergy, as parents/guardians you must notify the school and provide a doctor's report stating the implications of the allergy and listing the foods to be avoided. You will be asked to participate with staff in formulating an individual allergy management plan. This plan will identify how best to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction for your child, taking their age and class into account. The individual allergy management plan may result in precautions or class specific restrictions, in addition to those of not sharing food or containers, being put in place.

They are called class specific restrictions, as they will only apply to the class in which there is a child with a life-threatening allergy. Where class specific restrictions are required, the parents/guardians of all children in the affected class will be informed by a letter/ text/ email (some or all) explaining what the restrictions are and the reasons for them. These will be regularly reviewed and updated, and any changes will be communicated in writing.

Children with special/specific dietary needs will be catered for:

Dental Health

Dental health and disease prevention is important so children are encouraged to drink water, not juices or diluted fruit drinks during the school day. We acknowledge the importance of brushing twice a day and lessons will be taught in each class on dental health and efforts will be made to organise visits from a dentist/ hygienist to encourage good dental care and hygiene awareness.

Physical Activity

All children are encouraged to participate in lunch time activities in the school playground. The children will receive minimum-one hour of physical activity per week as part of the physical education curriculum. The school will provide physical and social environments that encourage and enable physical activity in a safe environment.

During the school year GAA Training is provided. A diversity of sporting activities are made available to each year group in any given year. A sports day for all day will be held in the final term. The school promotes participation in local competitions - Cumann na mBunscol, basketball, soccer, (5 – sided Tournament). The school promotes sport and physical activity- by providing information on sports clubs and physical activity opportunities within the community.

To help highlight the awareness of Healthy Lifestyles the following *takes/will take place*

- Teachers and pupils will discuss healthy eating and physical activity each term
- Rewards such as stickers, merits, Dojo points, certificates will be given to the children who have healthy lunches
- Our Healthy School Policy will be displayed where it is clearly visible to Teachers, Pupils and Parents
- Teachers will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage Healthy Eating
- All pupils will be encouraged to participate in plenty of physical activity with a variety of active play equipment available for use in the school. (Designated zones on the yard)
- Staff members will be encouraged to attend in-service courses and to participate in other forms of continuous professional development appropriate to their needs e.g. Food Dudes training.
- The school participates in the Food Dudes programme each year.

Implementation

If pupils bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home, as it is not allowed.

If children do not have anything else to eat, the teacher will deal with this matter at their discretion. If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher will organise a meeting with their Parents/Guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches/snacks, 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 pupils – 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 at the end of the year.

The overall performance of the Policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the BOM Staff and those responsible for its formulation and review. **(Principal, Deputy Principal & Róisín Kirk Food Dudes Coordinator)**

Success Criteria:

If the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and during other break times
- The feedback from Parents/Guardians and Staff
- The level of participation by the Pupils in the Food Dudes programme (Tasting session's new vegetables and fruit).

Timeframe for implementation: April 2026.

Ratification and Communication:

The BOM will ratify the policy on _____

The policy will be communicated to all Staff, Parents, BOM, Pupils. It will be promoted in school as part of the SPHE policy and it will be available on the school website.

Useful Information:

[Food Safety Healthy Eating Recipes](#)

The Health Promotion Unit has a booklet called [Healthy Lunchboxes](#)

Signed: _____ (Chairperson)

Date: _____