



Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at Scoil Náisiúnta na mBuachaillí we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What children eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy starting from _____.

Aims and Objectives

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
3. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
4. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
5. To raise levels of concentration within classes due to consumption of healthy food.
6. To encourage children to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons, straw wrappers, tin foil etc.

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. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. 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 lunches for your children

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal
Rice – wholegrain
Pasta – wholegrain
Potato Salad

Savouries

Lean Meat
Chicken/Turkey
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Cheese

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Wholemeal Scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Pitta bread

Quiche
Pizza

Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach
Mandarins, Orange segments,
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,
Plum, Pineapple cubes
Grapes,
Cucumber, Sweetcorn
Tomato,
Coleslaw.

Drinks

Milk
Squashes, i.e. low sugar
Yoghurt

A word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

We ask that children do not bring the following to school:

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

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn.

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.

We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch. Unfinished lunches are taken home. We encourage the use of a re-usable:

- **Plastic lunch box** no kitchen paper, cling film or tinfoil, freezer bags.
- **Reusable plastic bottle for drinks**, no drink cartons, glass bottles or cans.

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In our school we allow a treat on Friday only. A relaxation of the policy to be allowed on special occasions school outings, school parties etc.

Foods not allowed in school

Crisps
Popcorn *
Fizzy drinks including isotonic sports drinks
Sweets
Chocolate bars
Biscuits *
Cereal bars *
Chocolate spread
Chewing gum
Buns, cookies, muffins *

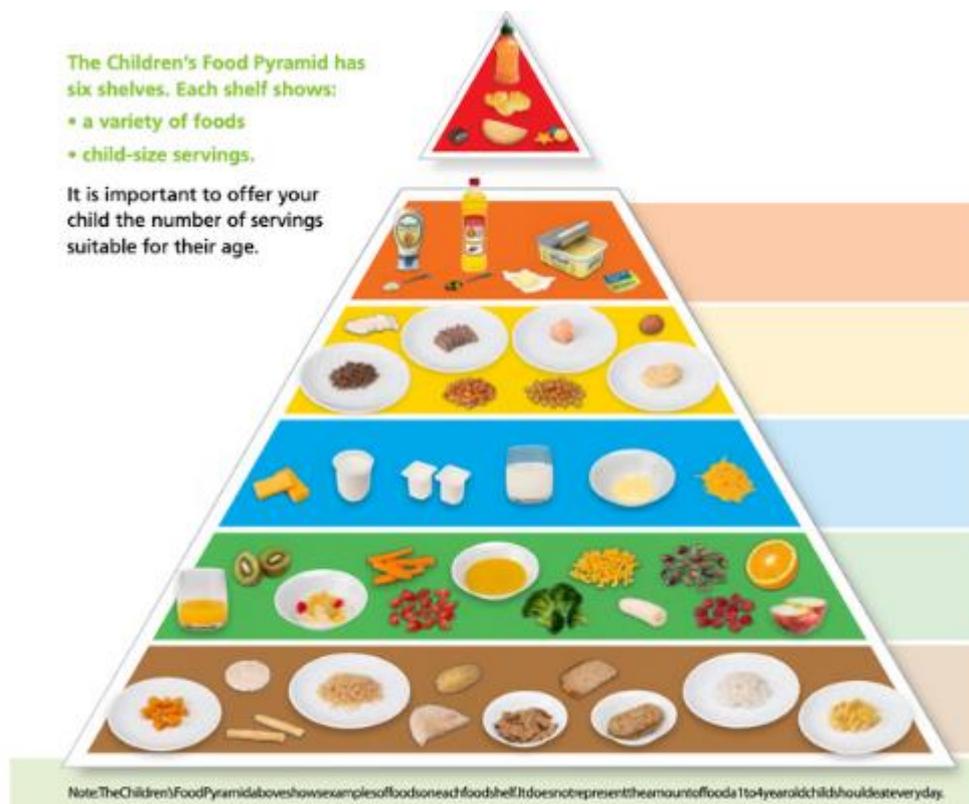
* Friday treats

Popcorn
Biscuits
Cereal bars
Buns
Muffins

Roles and Responsibility

Each class teacher will co-ordinate the progress of this policy and can encourage the children to bring healthy lunches but ultimately the responsibility for eating healthily lies with the Parent / Guardian of each child.

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



N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.

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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management & Parents' Council on _____. It will be reviewed on _____.