

Healthy Eating Policy

Naomh Mhuire NS, Walsh Island



Introductory Statement

Good nutrition is essential for school children. Physical activity is integral to any healthy eating programme and hence should be promoted and encouraged. A Healthy Eating Policy has been adopted by the Board of Management of Naomh Mhuire National School.

Rationale

- Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of the pupils and as such is part of the holistic education that Naomh Mhuire advocates. The adoption of the whole school approach ensures that healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of life in our school.
- Healthy eating is an integral part of the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) food and nutrition curriculum programme for each class. Research indicates that the provision of nutritious lunches enhances not only the pupil's health but also allows the pupil to take full advantage of the education provided by improved attention levels and concentration spans.
- Encourage your child to help prepare their lunch and to make healthy suggestions.
- Key healthy eating messages that are consistent and fact-based assist pupils in decision making and forming attitudes around healthy eating.
- Less processed and packaged foods also help contribute to our Green School's litter and waste campaign.

Aims

- To assist all involved in our school, pupils, parents and staff to develop a positive and responsible attitude to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health and energy.
 - To heighten an awareness of the importance of eating a balanced diet.
 - To raise levels of concentration among the pupils due to the consumption of healthy food.
 - To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food- pre-prepared meals etc. And to encourage awareness of the packaging on processed food, most of which is not recyclable.
 - To create a positive eating environment, both social and physical, at mealtimes.
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Guidelines

Breakfast

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day and all children should have a healthy breakfast before coming to school. Having a healthy breakfast every day has shown to improve concentration and overall behaviour as well as increased energy levels and helping to maintain a healthy weight long term.

Breakfast should be based on fibre rich foods such as cereals and fruit. Cereals like porridge and Weetabix are the best. High sugar cereals like Frosties, Coco-Pops and Crunchy Nut Cornflakes should be avoided. Try to fit in some fruit with your child's breakfast – slices of banana or apple can be very good with a cereal.

Healthy Lunch Box

Food

If you are not availing of the hot lunch:

The following foods are recommended for a balanced lunch:

- **Carbohydrate food** – Bread, roll, pitta bread, crackers, breadsticks, rice cakes, pasta, dry cereal(wholemeal preferably)
- **Protein food** – a nutritious filling for the above e.g. egg, meat or fish
- **Dairy item** – Cheese, milk or yoghurt
- **One or more pieces of fruit, salad or veg**

The following foods are **never permitted**:

- Chewing gum
- Nuts or nut products including chocolate spreads.
- Fizzy drinks
- Crisps (except when given as a treat by members of staff.)

The following foods are **not** permitted Monday – Thursday:

- Muffins
- Pretzels
- Biscuits
- Anything with chocolate (including, but not limited to; chocolate croissants, pain au chocolat, chocolate chip brioche, chocolate crepes)
- Treat yoghurts (containing chocolate, biscuits etc.)
- Cereal bars

The following foods are permitted on Friday only:

- Winders
 - Sweets, bars, cereal bars, chocolate, biscuits
 - Jellies
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On Fridays the children will be permitted **one small** treat. Jumbo/share size treats are not allowed.

Drink

The following drinks are recommended:

- Water, milk, 100% or unsweetened fruit juice (check sugar content) or a sugar free diluted juice drink.
- Children may drink water at regular intervals during the day. Pupils bring their own bottle of water to school.

The following drinks are **not permitted**

- Fizzy Drinks
- Energy Drinks
- Drinks in cans
- Bottled artificial juice drinks e.g. Ribena/Fruit Shoots
- For health and safety reasons hot drinks/soup in flasks are not permitted.

Healthy School Environment

- Every effort will be made to encourage parents to support the healthy eating policy.
- The teachers and the school promote our healthy eating policy using posters, leaflets and the food pyramid chart.
- National campaigns may be used as an opportunity to focus on healthy eating. Naomh Mhuire participated in the Food Dudes programme.
- We will organise a healthy eating week periodically to highlight this policy.
- Pupils eat their lunch while being supervised in the classrooms. Pupils use their lunch box lid as a plate.
- Pupils are encouraged to drink water/fluids during the school day.
- Pupils with healthy lunch boxes may be rewarded with dojos or other class rewards..

Success Criteria

Pupils will have a heightened awareness of healthy eating and will be enthusiastic while engaging with the policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents play an essential role in helping shape children's eating habits and attitudes towards physical activity. Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with a healthy lunch.

The teachers will monitor the progress of this policy in their own classroom. The teacher will send home any food not permitted as per the guidelines, along with any uneaten food.

While we have a Healthy Eating Policy in place, teachers may give sweets or treats as rewards on special occasions or holiday time. If sweet treats are given Mon-Thursday, children are asked to bring the treat home.

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Implementation and review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner in light of any significant changes.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy at its meeting on . Copies of this policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of staff and parents.

Signed: *Sean Hyland cc*

Chairperson Board of Management

Dated: *27/2/24*

