



Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drafted by the school Principal in consultation with the teaching staff of Kilmurry N.S. This policy is to inform children, parents and teachers of the types of food that are allowed/not allowed in Kilmurry N.S.

Rationale

Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue, reaching a large section of the community: children, families and teachers. The policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. Recent research (Department of Health and Children) has highlighted disturbing trends, including an increase in childhood obesity and diabetes. Therefore, our policy and guidelines are both timely and critical for the health and development of children.

Aims

The aims of the policy are to:

1. Help all those involved in our school community, children, staff and parents, to develop positive attitudes to eating and healthy living. We wish to promote 'the personal development and well-being of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. (SPHE Guidelines)
2. Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food. The purpose of making healthy food choices is to enable children to attain their optimum growth, development and health potential.
3. Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which is hoped will become lifelong habits. To help achieve this, our guidelines will reflect good eating habits. These should be established at an early age. Children have a right to learn about different foods so that they may make informed choices throughout their life.
4. Provide members of staff, parents and those involved in school activities with clear information.
5. Protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.
6. Through a whole-school approach, and within the context of SPHE, teach the children, parents and staff about nutrition, healthy eating and healthy living.

7. Enable the children to develop and understand healthy living and develop an ability to implement healthy behaviour and willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health. This includes physical activity.
8. School staff will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
9. Parents will be supported in their role as Primary Educators by providing them with up-to-date information on healthy eating habits from the Dept. of Health.

We believe that, in developing the policy, parents, children, teachers, school staff and the BOM should be involved in a collaborative way. We aim to review these guidelines every two years.

Content of the Policy

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/ Cereals
- Fruit, Fruit Juice with no added sugar and Vegetables
- Milk, Cheese and Yogurt
- Meat, Chicken, Fish and Alternatives

Guidelines

A healthy lunch box includes:

- At least 2 portions from the bread/cereals group.
- One portion from the meat and the meat alternatives group.
- 2-3 portions from fruits and vegetables.
- One portion from the dairy products.

Foods and drinks not allowed in school:




In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children in school the following foods and drinks are prohibited, except on treat days:

- Crisps
- Sweets
- Bars/biscuits
- Lollipops
- Any chocolate flavoured item
- Crispie buns
- Chocolate / chocolate spreads
- Fizzy Drinks

- Fruit juices high in sugar
- Yogurt high in sugar
- Cereal bars high in sugar
- Chewing gum is strictly forbidden

Is my Drink Tooth Friendly?

The following is a guide on the best drinks to give your children and when to ensure healthy teeth.

		
Any Time	Only at Mealtimes	Not Tooth Friendly
Water Milk	Unsweetened fruit juice Diluted sugar-free squash Flavoured milk Yogurt or milk drinks Smoothies	Sweetened fruit juice Fizzy drinks (including diet versions)

Why children should drink milk:

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yogurt or other dairy products. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink milk at lunchtime, please encourage him/her to have a carton of yogurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

What could I give my child to eat for lunch?

The following guide is designed to help provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for children. They are suggestions and the list is by no means exhaustive. If any parent has any good ideas they would like to share, we are always willing to take new ideas on board.

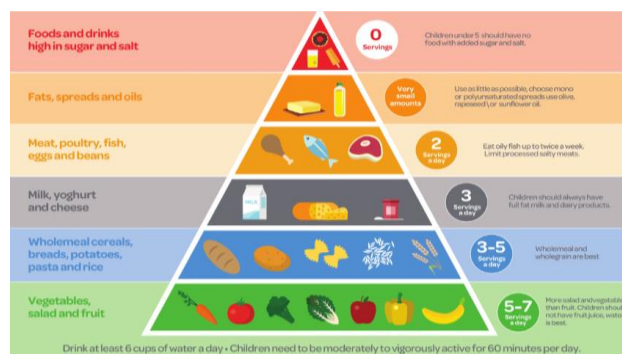
Below is a list of possible foods you could pack for your children's lunch. This list is not exhaustive and only mentions samples of appropriate foods for the lunchbox.

Bread and Alternatives:	Fruit and Vegetables:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread or rolls (preferably wholemeal) • Pitta bread • Wraps • Crackers • Rice Salad • Pasta Salad • Wholemeal scones • Rice cakes (no chocolate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apples, banana, peach • Mandarins, oranges • Carrot sticks • Cucumbers • Melon slices • Pineapple cubes • Grapes • Sweetcorn • Tomato

Savouries:	Drinks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meat • Chicken/ Turkey • Tinned fish – tuna etc. • Cheese • Quiche • Olives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Water • Fruit juices (un-sweetened) • Diluted sugar free squash • Yoghurt drinks • Flask of soup

Other tips and hints:

- Keep lunches in fridge if prepared the night before.
- Use small insulated cool bag especially in warmer weather.
- Cut sandwiches into small manageable pieces, especially for infants.
- Peel fruit for younger children.
- Avoid foods that children cannot eat without help.
- Make lunches as varied as possible. Children love comparing their lunches and talking about them so please make sure your child is excited about their lunch.
- Vary the types of bread in sandwiches (wholemeal, granary, high fibre rolls, bagels, pitta and sliced bread).
- If sending your child to school with a yogurt, include a plastic bag to keep the empty packaging in.
- Encourage your child to bring their rubbish home in their lunch box as this will inform you of what they have eaten and reduce our waste.



The food pyramid is a key tool in communicating healthy eating messages.

- It is very important for children's energy and concentration levels that they eat a healthy breakfast before coming to school.
- A healthy lunchbox includes pieces from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid.
- Bottom shelf carbohydrates (energy) and fruit and vegetables (vitamin/minerals rich) are especially encouraged (to ensure recommended daily portions are met).
- Children will normally have two food breaks during the day and will be given 10 minutes at each break to eat their lunch.
- Any food from the top shelf of the pyramid is not allowed in school.

- Staff will support the healthy eating policy and will not offer sweets to children as rewards or prizes.
- Cakes, buns or treats (sweets or chocolate) for birthdays will not be distributed.
- Invitations to birthday parties must be distributed outside of school hours and will not be facilitated in the classroom.

Treat Day

On a treat day, as determined by the school, parents/guardians may give treats to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class.

These are special occasions such as:

- End of term parties
- Halloween
- School trips and events

Although it is a special occasion, treats are not allowed on a child's birthday.

Healthy Snack options (Lower in sugar and fat)

Foods from the top tier of the food pyramid should not be included in your child's lunchbox. Sometimes it can be difficult to think of alternatives to these. Here are some tasty alternatives.

- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, pepper and cucumber.
- Half a tin of fruit (in its own juice)
- Plain pop corn (unsalted)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Plain rice cakes.
- Natural or low sugar content yogurt with fresh fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned in its own juice)
- Wholemeal or plain scones.
- Plain biscuits (for example, rich tea)*
- Fruit bun or mini fruit loaf.*
- A plain slice of cake.*
- A slice of carrot cake or banana bread.*
- Sugar-free jelly pots or fruit jelly.
- Pot of custard or rice pudding.

**These are best taken with meals (when they are less damaging to the teeth) and should not be taken too frequently between meals. These snacks are nutritious, but still contain some sugar, fat and salt.*

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.

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.

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 her/his 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 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.

Implementation

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school, they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home, as it is not allowed and you will be sent a reminder to adhere to our healthy eating policy.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher and Principal 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, 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 by the BOM, responsible for its formulation and review.

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 classroom

Review

It is intended to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure implementation of this Healthy Eating Policy. The Principal has responsibility for co-ordinating the review.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was communicated to all members of the Board of Management including parents' nominees on the Board.

This Healthy Eating Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Kilmurry National School at a meeting on the _____

This policy was reviewed again on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management