

Healthy Eating Policy

January 2024

Policy Document



St. Flannan's National School

Healthy Eating Policy

ST. FLANNAN'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

This policy was originally drafted by the Healthy Eating Policy Review Committee which consisted of parents, members of the teaching staff and a dietician specialising in childhood nutrition. This review of the previous Healthy Eating Policy took place to take account of some general feedback and suggestions from staff and parents. The re-drafted policy was made available to parents and school staff for further consultation before being ratified by the Board of Management on 24th January 2022.

2. RATIONALE

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lives. In view of the recent media emphasis on obesity and lifestyle trends we feel it of vital importance to educate the children in our school to develop healthy eating habits for life. By having this policy, we aim to encourage and develop these healthy habits and encourage our pupils to make healthy choices in their everyday lives. Research has shown that inadequate nutrition impacts negatively on children's ability to learn and benefit from education. Proper nutrition can improve children's ability to concentrate, improve disruptive behaviour and encourage children to attend school.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- a) To help pupils establish a healthy lifestyle that we hope they continue into adulthood
- b) To help the children understand the link between a healthy diet and a healthy, active lifestyle
- c) To encourage children to experience a wide variety of foods
- d) To improve oral/ dental health
- e) To reduce litter and encourage recycling by encouraging children to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by for example non-reusable drinks containers and tin foil.
- f) To ensure the safety of children with allergies
- g) To enable pupils to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet
- h) To raise pupils' concentration levels at school through the consumption of healthy food.

4. SPHE CURRICULUM

There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of living a healthy life.

The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum.

Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level.

These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as science and P.E.. Healthy Eating initiatives are incorporated into our Active Schools' Week.

5. GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

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). Children and their parents should be aware of the sugar content in foods/drinks. Parents and children should read food labels themselves and be aware of the recommended daily intake values. These values are guidelines and actual values will vary depending on the age of the child, activity level etc.

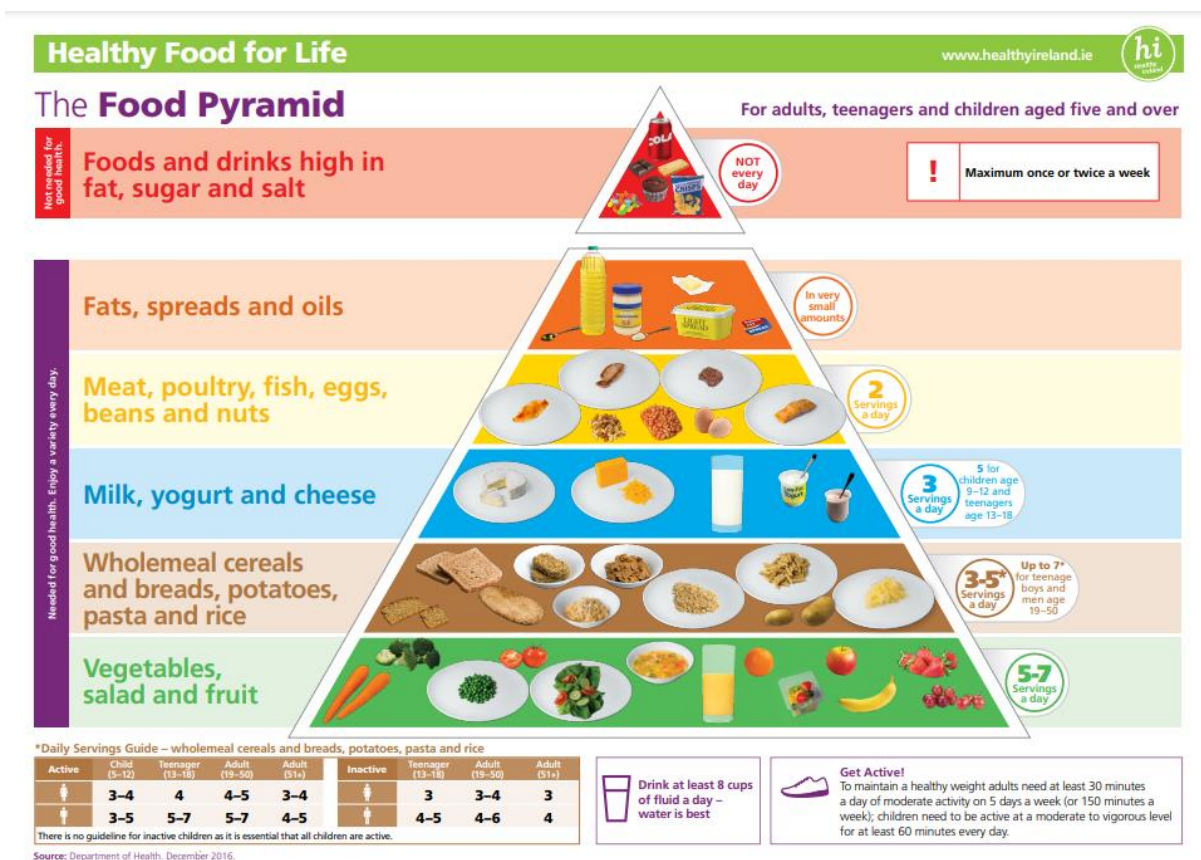
As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green Schools' status lunches should be packed in lunch boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. Water is to be stored in a clear see-through reusable plastic bottle. Children are encouraged to keep a water bottle on their desks at all times and to sip from it regularly throughout the day. All litter and uneaten food is to be taken home. Children will be asked not to swap lunches or share food utensils/ drink containers.

On celebratory Days such as Hallowe'en/ Easter/ Christmas holidays, sports day, school trip etc. treats may be offered to pupils.

The following recommendations are designed to help parents provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for their children:

Bread & Alternatives	Savouries/ Savoury Fillings
Bread or rolls, preferably whole meal Rice Pasta Potato Salad Wholemeal Scones Bagels Pitta Bread/ Baps	Lean Meat Chicken/ Turkey Cheese Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/ sardines Quiche
Fruit & Vegetables	Drinks
Apple; Banana; Peach; Mandarin; Orange Segments; Fruit Salad; Dried Fruit; Plum; Pineapple Pieces; Grapes; Cucumber; Sweet Corn; Tomato; Carrot Sticks	Water or Milk are the most tooth friendly drinks Dilutable Squashes (No added Sugar)

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



Useful Links with Ideas for Healthy Lunches: (these URLs may be subject to change)

<http://www.safefood.eu/SafeFood/media/SafeFoodLibrary/Documents/Education/2012-Safefood-Healthy-Lunchboxes-Leaflet-v4.pdf> http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Healthier_Lunchbox_Leaflet_09_10_Irish.pdf

www.indi.ie (Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute website) You will find a leaflet 'Are you packing a healthy lunch' www.healthpromotion.ie

<http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx> http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch_box/lunch_box.html <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/packing-school-lunchbox>

6. A WORD ABOUT DAIRY

The H.S.E. recommends that primary school children aged up to 8 years should choose any three servings each day from the dairy shelf of the food pyramid. Five portions a day are recommended for children aged 9-18 years.

Depending on the age of the child, 1 serving is for example:

1 large glass (200ml) low fat or low fat fortified milk

1 small carton yogurt (125ml)

1 small carton fromage frais 25g/1oz (matchbox size piece) of low fat cheddar

1 portion of milk pudding made with a large glass low fat milk

Milk is a rich source of protein, calcium, vitamins and minerals.

7. DRINKING PLENTY OF WATER

Water is essential for life. Through perspiration (sweating), the body uses water to lower body temperature when it is warm.

Regular drinks are necessary to replace fluid lost during the day. Without enough water or fluid in the short-term, the dehydration that results causes tiredness. Water is a tooth friendly drink.

The more active a person is, the more fluid is needed to replace fluid lost as sweat.

In hot weather, or if playing sports, children should bring extra water to school.

8. FOODS/ PRODUCTS NOT ALLOWED IN SCHOOL

- a) Crisps, chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not allowed
- b) Peanuts, or any foods containing nuts or traces of nuts are not allowed under any circumstances. There are a number of pupils in school who have a nut allergy
- c) Chocolate products, sweets
- d) Fruit juices
- e) Fruit winders

If children bring any of the above prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home.

9. SPECIAL DIETARY/ MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Parents of children with special dietary requirements are required to make an appointment with the principal to discuss the implications of this policy.

We respect parents' decision to provide food in school which reflects their religious, ethnic, medical and allergenic needs.

10. PACKING THE LUNCH BOX

Children's portion sizes have gotten bigger over the last 20-30 years. Children should be able to eat their lunches in a reasonable amount of time, 10 minutes at both small and big break.

11. CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNWRAP AND EAT THEIR LUNCHES BY THEMSELVES.

It is not possible for teachers to open lunches in a classroom full of children.

Please help by not giving products that pupils cannot open themselves e.g., foods with wrappers, unpeeled oranges etc.

To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g., fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut).

Parents must ensure that lunch boxes contain whatever utensils are required.

As we are trying to reduce the amount of waste in the school, parents are encouraged to reduce the amount of packaging in their child's lunch box.

12. SCHOOL FRUIT SCHEME

The School Fruit Programme operated by the Department of Social Protection provides funding towards provision of fruit for pupils in participating schools. Children are provided with fruit to eat at the Fruit Break at 11.00am.

13. 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 ensuring that children eat healthily lies with the Parent /Guardian of each child.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be implemented from _____

The policy will be reviewed biennially by the SPHE post holder in the school in consultation with staff and the wider school community. It will be reviewed sooner in light of any new developments in our school.

COMMUNICATION AND RATIFICATION

The policy has been discussed and amended by the school staff and ratified by the board of management. It is also available on the school website.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

NEXT REVIEW:

Date