



Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

We, the Principal, Staff and Board of Management of Ballyagran National School place value in the benefits of providing a holistic and rounded education to all children. Nutrition is a significant factor in the growth, development and overall functioning of a child. Good nutrition provides the energy and nutrients essential to sustain life and promotes physical, emotional and cognitive development. In other words, it is a major contributory factor to students performing as well as they possibly can during their time in school. “Healthy Eating” makes up a significant portion of the SPHE curriculum and therefore an integral part of children’s learning in school.

Rationale

The development of healthy eating practices and physical activity can prevent disease and support a lifetime of good health. Good nutrition is critical to optimising each child’s potential for success. Meeting nutritional requirements throughout childhood is essential to full intellectual development. Research documents tell us that ‘*under nutrition*’ impacts on children’s behaviour, performance and overall quality of development. Children require sufficient energy and essential nutrients each day to help them to concentrate on accomplishing learning tasks. Even *mild* and *under nutrition* and *short term hunger* are barriers to learning. Lunches and snacks should meet children’s nutritional needs, provide models of healthy eating patterns, and help children establish good eating patterns at an early age. Additionally, we believe that by teaching children healthy eating habits, by helping them explore what constitutes a balanced diet and by avoiding over-indulgence, we are preparing them within the ethos of our Catholic Primary School which states that as a school we will:

*“strive to be a **good school** and aim at promoting the full and harmonious development of **all aspects** of the person of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual.”*

School Ethos & Policy Links

This policy sits in conjunction with the school’s policies on Child Protection, SPHE, RE and Green Schools Policy. It mirrors policies in place in other primary schools, while drawing on the most up-to-date research in the area of diet and healthy eating for children (*see addresses on last page for links to more Healthy Eating information*).

Aim of Healthy Eating

To work in partnership with families and other professionals to support children in developing healthy eating practices which will become embedded in each child's life.

Objectives

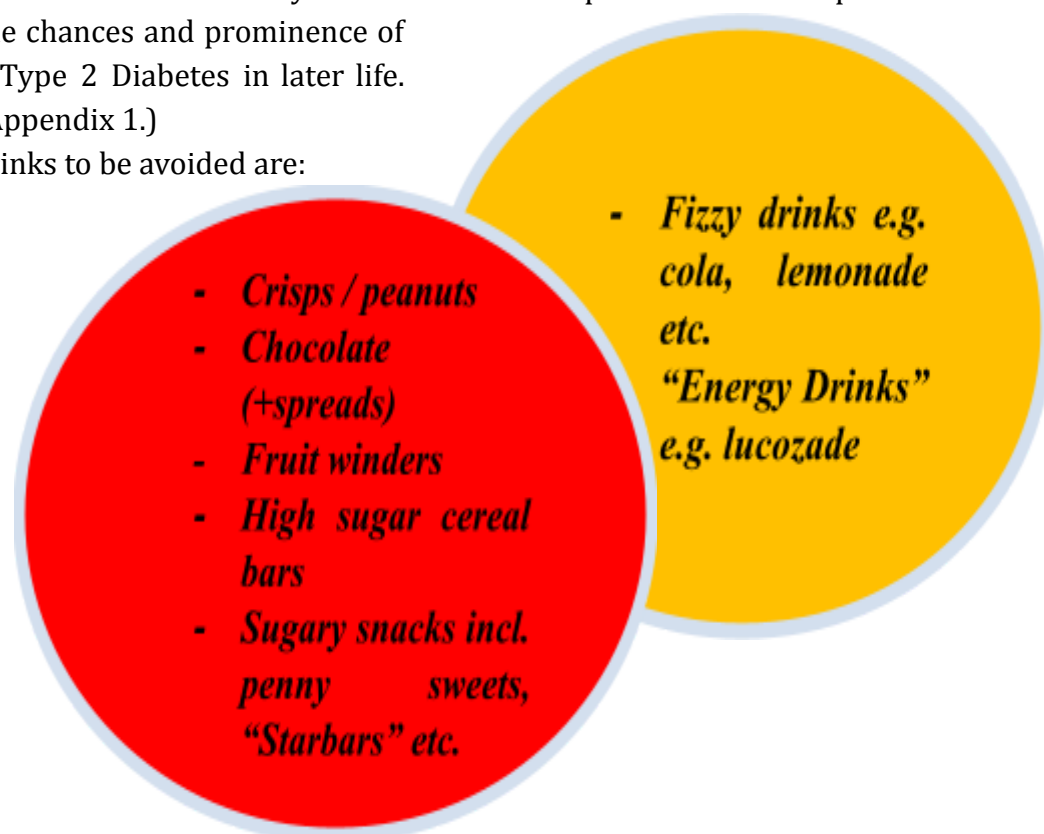
- To provide children with positive healthy eating experiences in order to promote their well-being.
- To respect the different dietary, cultural, religious and health needs of all our children
- To encourage children to develop positive attitudes towards food through the curriculum and all the other learning opportunities that are provided in the school.
- To promote an understanding of a balanced diet in which some foods play a greater role than others.
- To develop children's understanding of the importance of the social context in which eating takes place.
- To raise awareness with children, parents and carers in developing a positive approach to food, nutrition and oral education.
- To encourage responsibility and accountability of all parents and carers in offering healthy choices to children.

What does a Healthy Eating Policy mean in school?

We recognise national and international research, while aiming to mirror the practice of other primary schools when implementing this policy. We will discourage the consumption of sugary snacks, foods high in fat and salt as research has shown that they can have a negative effect on children's ability to concentrate and perform to their optimum as well as increasing the chances and prominence of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes in later life.

(Please See Appendix 1.)

Foods and drinks to be avoided are:



Please Note:

- From time to time the class teacher may decide to give a sweet as a “treat” to a student or even, to the class. This is the privilege of the teacher, used to promote good behaviour as well as being a homely, generous gesture towards his/her students. If a parent does not wish his/her son/daughter to be included in this practice they should make their wishes known to the relevant class teacher in writing.
- One day a week (Friday) children will be allowed to bring “one small treat” in their lunchboxes. We will stress that this is to be a reward for the efforts of the week while also showing that Healthy Eating can be accomplished as well as maintaining a balanced diet.

So what foods are “good” to eat?

This is a Food Pyramid. It shows us what foods we should try to eat more of (towards the bottom 3-5) and what foods we should eat in smaller amounts (towards the top 1 & 2)

So what foods might I include in my child's lunch?

Fresh Fruit (whole or chopped)
Vegetables (cooked or raw)
Pasta (brown or white)
Fish (tuna, salmon, sardines, cod etc.)
Meat (ham/chicken/beef)

Sandwiches (brown bread preferred due to it providing a balance of complex carbohydrates)
Dairy Products (cheese/cheese spreads, yoghurt and milk.)

For more information or to access a copy of the HSE publication on Healthy Eating for Children (**Appendix 1**) or click the following link:

http://www.ippn.ie/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=att_download&link_id=2621&cf_id=24

The Importance of Nutrition for Children

A nutritionally balanced diet is important in childhood to ensure optimum development at a time of rapid growth. A balanced diet in childhood is not only important for growth but for learning and promoting positive habits towards future eating habits. An inadequate or unbalanced nutritional intake may not only affect growth and development in childhood but may also impact on health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity later in life. It is the types and varieties of food eaten at this time that ensure nutrient requirements are met and that the diet is nutritionally balanced. Children's diet must include an appropriate intake of foods from the four main food groups:

- *Bread, other cereals and potatoes*
- *Fruit and vegetables*
- *Milk and dairy foods*
- *Meat, fish and alternatives*

Being Healthy

- *Eat breakfast every day*
- *Eat fruit and vegetables daily*
- *Choose snacks that will provide nutrients to compliment meals*
- *Avoid snacks and drinks with a high sugar content between meals*
- *Drink plenty of fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated*
- *Be physically active every day*
- *Brush teeth twice a day and visit your dentist regularly*

Food and drink

All snacks and lunches should be nutritious, avoiding large quantities of sugar, salt, saturated fats, additives, preservatives and colourings. Lunches need to be planned in advanced over a period of time will develop a pattern that your child will embrace and accept.

Availability of water

- We have fresh drinking water readily available for children if needed
- We support the children in recognising that they need to drink water when they are thirsty, hot or tired, or feeling unwell.

Special dietary needs and food allergies

We are sensitive to the fact that the needs of some children are different. From time-to-time we may have children with special dietary requirements due to (a) religious beliefs and/or (b) allergies. Parents will be asked about any special dietary requirements their child has before their child starts school. Parents of children who have special diets (for example a gluten-free diet) or who have food intolerances are responsible for providing the school with information about their diet and implications for lunches and if the lunches of other children may impact on their child (e.g. sensitivity to nuts may mean that a child sitting next to them or even in some cases, being in the same room, having a nut product may present a risk to that child). Likewise if a child develops a food intolerance having already completed one or more years in school, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school in writing.

Social skills

Meals can be times of pleasant social sharing. Opportunities for pupils, teachers and staff to eat and drink together will be provided from time to time. This provides an opportunity for students to learn good social skills and behaviour associated with eating and drinking. Staff will keep a discreet eye on those who appear not to be eating well and positive encouragement and peer support is used to encourage poor eaters to make healthy choices. Healthy eating suggestions from parents will help us to help other parents with lunch ideas for their children.

Festivals and celebrations

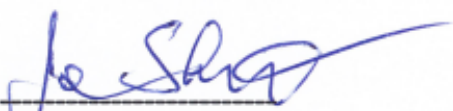
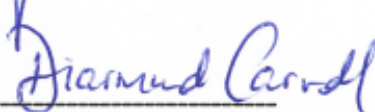
At Ballyagran N.S. we celebrate different festivals and celebrations. We recognise that festivals can provide a valuable opportunity for children to experience diversity from a wide range of cultures and nationalities and the contribution they make to the variety of foods eaten in Ireland today.

CONSULTATION PROCESS:

This policy has been developed in consultation with:

- Pupils of the school through the teaching of SPHE and discussions thereafter.
- Parents through use of questionnaire and attending P.A. meetings
- Staff: especially Principal, class teachers, Resource/ L.S. teachers.
- Non-teaching staff.
- Board of Management
- Parents' Association
- Research by various Government Bodies

This Policy was ratified by the BoM in February 2018

Signed: 
Signed: 

Useful Websites

www.healthyschools.gov.uk

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/462570f8-27cc-4f5b-a13e-d1e2de8c18d2/PSEC06_SPHE_curriculum.pdf

www.fooddudes.ie

http://www.ippn.ie/index.php?option=com_mtree&task=att_download&link_id=2621&cf_id=24

Appendix 1 - HSE - HEALTHY EATING FOR CHILDREN

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Many of the choices you make for your children today will influence their health in the future. One decision you make everyday involves the choice and preparation of meals, particularly school lunches. Healthy eating habits started in childhood will stay with your children forever and influence their chances of a healthier life. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. This leaflet was produced to provide you with information and some useful ideas to fill healthy well balanced lunch boxes. The suggested lunches are easy to prepare and inexpensive. The leaflet also contains an example of a day's eating pattern containing healthy food choices for your children. We hope that this leaflet will assist you in achieving a healthy eating pattern for your family.

Healthy food pyramid

The Healthy Food Pyramid is a fun way of teaching your children about the different food groups. The pyramid is divided into five shelves, each representing a different food group. Choosing a variety of foods from each shelf ensures that your children have a balanced and healthy diet. You should select most of your children's foods from the bottom two shelves of the Healthy Food Pyramid. Smaller amounts of food should be chosen from the next two shelves, while foods at the top of the pyramid should be taken sparingly.

Healthy servings

The following is a list of suggested servings from each of the food groups in the Healthy Food Pyramid. Each represents one serving. The recommended number of daily servings are indicated beside each food group.

Cereals, bread and potatoes group 6+

- 1 oz slice wholemeal bread or breakfast cereal
- 1 small bread roll 1 small scone – plain/brown/fruit
- 2 wholegrain cream crackers or crispbread
- 1 oz plain popcorn
- 1 medium-sized potato – boiled or baked
- 2 tablespoons boiled rice or pasta

Children and teenagers may require additional amounts from the Cereals, Bread and Potatoes Group for physical activity and growth.

Fruit and vegetable group 4+

- 1 medium-sized fresh fruit, e.g. apple, orange, banana, pear
- 1/2 glass unsweetened fruit juice
- Salad vegetables, e.g. tomato, lettuce, cucumber, carrot, celery
- Vegetable sticks made with carrot, pepper, celery, cucumber
- 2 tablespoons cooked vegetables or salad bowl of home-made vegetable soup

Milk, cheese and yogurt group 3

1/3 pint milk 1 carton yogurt

1 oz cheddar/Edam/Blarney cheese

2 cheese singles

Meat, fish and alternatives group 2

2 oz lean cooked meat, beef, lamb, ham, corned beef

2 oz chicken/turkey

3 oz fish, tuna, mackerel, sardines

2 eggs (not more than 7 per week)

2 oz pate (low fat)

1 oz peanut butter

4 oz baked beans

How many servings from the food pyramid did you have today?			
Cereals, bread and potatoes group	Fruit and vegetables group	Milk, cheese and yogurt group	Meat, fish and alternatives group
Total :	Total:	Total:	Total:

Healthy light lunches

Monday's lunch is fun and good to eat 1 glass or small carton of milk

Peanut butter sandwich on wholemeal bread

1 orange

Tuesday's lunch leaves time for playing

Flask of soup Pate or tuna roll Carrot and celery sticks

1 mandarin or grapes

Wednesday's lunch is nice and filling

1 glass or carton of unsweetened fruit juice

Corned beef sandwich on wholemeal bread

1 yogurt Popcorn

Thursday's lunch is hard to beat

Cheese on wholegrain scone

1 apple

1 glass of water, or milk, or fruit juice

Friday's lunch and off we go "free for two days in a row"

1 glass or carton of unsweetened fruit juice

Egg and salad sandwich on wholemeal bread or filled pita bread

1 banana or pear

Our light lunches are healthy, yet they cost less than €1.

Use lettuce or slices of tomatoes or cucumber to brighten up a sandwich, and for added vitamin C.

Healthy main meals

Suggested meal plan for 5-10 year olds

Breakfast

The most important meal of your child's day

Fresh fruit or unsweetened fruit juice

Breakfast cereal, e.g. wholegrain/bran type or porridge

Wholemeal bread, butter/margarine spread thinly –preferably low fat.

Jam/marmalade

Milk or tea

Lunch

Should provide one third of your child's food requirements for the day.

Meat, fish, chicken or combination dishes, e.g. pizza, quiche

Bread for sandwiches – rolls, pita, soda bread

Fresh fruit/yogurt 1 glass or carton of milk or unsweetened fruit juice

Dinner

Adapt your favourite recipes into healthy, balanced dishes.

Home-made vegetable soup Lean meat or chicken or fish

Good serving of vegetables or salad

Boiled/baked potatoes or boiled rice/pasta

Fresh fruit/stewed fruit/milk pudding/yogurt 1 glass of water

Milk or tea

Bedtime/between meals

Cup of milk and small snack, e.g. wholegrain cracker, scone, plain biscuit

Healthy eating Dos and don'ts of good eating for children

DO eat regular meals, not one big meal each day

DO eat as wide a variety of food as possible

DO eat breakfast every day

DO eat more fruit, vegetables and salad foods

DO eat wholegrain cereals and bread

DO drink plenty of water

DO use mayonnaise/salad creams/salt sparingly

DO remember to brush your teeth after breakfast and at bedtime

DON'T skip meals or eat lots of snacks each day

DON'T eat fried foods. Grilled instead.

DON'T eat sweets, cakes and biscuits too often. Have them as occasional treats.

Healthy recipes

Family salad

8 oz boiled potatoes (cold)

1 small lettuce, shredded or cut up

1 red apple, sliced

1 onion, chopped

8 oz carrots, cut into small pieces

8 oz cold cooked chicken or other meat, cut into small pieces

4 hard boiled eggs

Cut the potatoes into chunks and place all the salad ingredients, except the eggs, into a bowl. Mix together.

Cut the eggs into quarters and add to the salad. Serve with French dressing.

Soda bread plait

8 oz self-raising flour 1 oz soft margarine

1/4 pint milk

1 egg beaten

1 oz poppy or sesame seeds, if liked

(This recipe can be used for a pizza base or for scones).

Turn on the oven to gas mark 7 ,425°F, 220°C.

Put the flour and baking powder into a bowl and mix together.

Rub in the margarine.

Make a hole in the centre and pour in the milk. Mix well together.

Turn out onto a floured surface and knead.

Divide into 3 equal parts.

Roll out each part into a sausage shape about 2cm long.

Press the top ends together and plait.

Press the bottom ends together.

Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with the poppy seeds.

Bake on a tray in the centre of the oven for about 20 minutes.

Community Nutrition Services Eastern Health Board (Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow) Tel: 01 670 7987 North Western Health Board (Sligo, Leitrim, Donegal) Tel: 072 52000 North Eastern Health Board (Meath, Louth, Cavan, Monaghan) Tel: 046 21595 Midland Health Board (Laois, Offaly, Longford, Westmeath) Tel: 044 44877 Western Health Board (Galway, Mayo, Roscommon) Tel: 091 751131 South Eastern Health Board (Carlow, Kilkenny) Tel:056 61400 Mid-Western Health Board (Limerick, Tipperary, Clare) Tel: 061 483215 Southern Health Board (Cork, Kerry) Tel: 021 923480