



Ballyhass N.S. Nutrition Policy

Mission Statement:

Nutrition is well recognised for its significant and positive impact on academic performance and students' growth and development. In addition, good nutrition and physical activity facilitate the development of good lifestyle habits that will contribute to students' health and maximize achievement. Ballyhass National School encourages its pupils to bring healthy lunches and snacks to school on a daily basis.

Aims:

- To take a whole school approach to food in school
- To promote nutritional awareness
- To help both children and parents make healthy food choices
- To support and encourage long term healthy eating habits in children
- To ensure a 'Nut Free Zone'

The aims listed above will be implemented through the following objectives, using the key areas of a Health Promoting School:

1. Environment

Lunches:

We recommend that parents supply children with a healthy lunch. To facilitate this we have attached some examples of healthy lunch options. Ensuring your child has a balanced and healthy diet it is recommended (by the Health Service Executive) that they follow the food pyramid on a daily basis. See Food Pyramid on www.safefood.eu

Beverages:

In addition to supplying a healthy diet, fluid intake is as important for your child's wellbeing. According to the new food pyramid guidelines, it is recommended to 'drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best'. Water intake should be higher in warm weather or when the child is exercising. We

encourage water consumption by allowing children to consume water during class times. Milk & water are recommended to accompany lunches or snacks.

Guidelines:

1. No fizzy drinks
2. No nuts or products containing nut traces of any kind are to be consumed (for example, chocolate/nut spreads, peanut butter are not allowed)
3. No chocolate, sweets, sticky bars, chewing gum, crisps, cereal bars, fruit winders, jelly, jam tarts.
4. If a child's lunch contains the prohibited food or drink, the teacher will remove item and send home with child at the end of the day
5. A small homemade bun/tart is allowed
6. Strongly encourage fruit and vegetables as part of lunch/snack
7. Plain water can be consumed during class.
8. In instances where the school chooses to offer a reward to students or classes for good behaviour or achievement physical activities will be used and treats used sparingly.

Food Safety:

- Children should wash their hands prior to eating.
- Sandwiches containing meat or other foods that require refrigeration should be kept as cold as possible until lunch. Help keep lunches cool and safe by following these tips:
 - An insulated box or bag can be used to help keep lunches cool. A small ice pack can also be used.
 - It is important that lunches are not kept in a warm place such as near a radiator or in direct sunlight
- Discard any perishable food that hasn't been eaten at the end of the day
- Wash and dry reusable water bottles, lids and lunchboxes every day in warm soapy water
- Allergies/Medical Conditions – Parents/Guardians are requested to inform the school at the earliest opportunity of any allergies/dietary and /or medical conditions.

Picky Eaters:

Most young children go through periods of faddy eating when they refuse to eat certain foods. Usually it passes but if a child's fussy eating habits go on for a long time, or prevent them from getting a healthy diet, parents may need to take action.

Tips for Dealing with Picky Eaters:

- Instead of offering your child a new food, eat it yourself, praising its taste and smell and only let them have a bite when they ask - begging for something always increases desire to have it when you get it.
- Offer only one new food at a time and serve it alongside something quite similar – mashed potato alongside pureed carrot, for example. Anything too dissimilar can seem strange.
- Don't serve a new food alongside your child's current favourite as there's no incentive to try something new if he or she is already looking forward to something else they can see on the plate.
- Growing your own fruit and vegetables can encourage children to try them.
- "Hide" nutritional food in food that your child will eat. For example, if your child will eat spaghetti bolognese whiz extra vegetables for the sauce.
- Let children help you with the grocery shopping (i.e. let them choose the fruit or veg they might like to eat). Include them in meal preparation from the shopping to the serving and they might be more willing to eat.
- Replace junk with fresh, fast food. Keep baby carrots, apple slices, grapes and cheese sticks in the fridge so kids can grab and go.
- Catch children's attention with presentation. Use cookie cutters to make sandwiches in different shapes or raisins to make a smiley face on toast. If food appeals to children they are more likely to eat it.
- Turn food tasting into a game. Tell children you need their expert opinions on tasting a new dish, and allow their verdicts to guide menu planning.
- Avoid using 'treat' foods like sweets and biscuits as bribes for rewards for eating healthy food.

2. Curriculum and Learning

Ballyhass NS aims to achieve the learning outcomes set out in the SPHE Curriculum and to develop life skills in the pupils to make informed decisions about healthy lifestyles. Ballyhass NS aims to be consistent with healthy eating messages in other subject areas such as PE, Science etc.

Exercise:

As part of promoting a balanced healthy lifestyle Ballyhass NS advocates daily physical activity. The department of Health and Children and the Irish Heart foundation recommend that: “children and young people should aim to participate in activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour each day.” To facilitate this requirement Ballyhass NS has two break periods per day totalling 45 minutes. All children are encouraged to spend the majority of this period in physical activity. Football, races and skipping are strongly encouraged (skipping ropes and footballs are provided). In addition there is 1 hour of scheduled PE per week for each class.

There are also a number of extra physical activities e.g.:

Swimming - 6 sessions for each student per school year – Term 1

Athletics/Dance/Gymnastics lessons taught by visiting teacher 45 mins per class for all classes – Term 2 and 3

GAA skills taught by member of local GAA club 45 mins per class (J.I. – 2nd) usually in Term 2/3

3. Policy and Planning

Ballyhass NS aims to plan SPHE/healthy eating lessons at similar times in all classes during the school year. Class projects on the food pyramid etc can be displayed on the notice boards to increase nutritional awareness.

Sufficient time will be allocated to pupils for eating lunch before going to the yard for break and lunch time.

Introduction of school milk scheme

4. Partnerships

Ballyhass NS work, communicate and are supported by the following:

- Parents Association
- External partners that support school curriculum – sporting partners for GAA skills and Dance/Athletics/Gymnastics lessons
- Department of Health – ‘Healthy Ireland’ resources
- Food Dudes programme
- Incredible Edibles
- Local 4Home/ Dairygold Co-Op

Ongoing promotion of a healthy nutrition policy within the school will be encouraged by:

Healthy Eating week

Subjects covered in SPHE

Lunch box checks

Fruit and veg days

Class fruit and veg calendar

School Milk program

Certificate and awards for the most active class

Policy updated in 2021

Reference material: Dept of Health & Children, Health Service Executive, Irish Heart foundation, Water UK, Water for Health, Growing kids UK

Ratification and Communication

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson Date _____ Principal Date _____

Policy will be reviewed as needed

