



## Ballygiblin National School Healthy Eating Policy

### RATIONALE

Healthy eating is central to a person's overall wellbeing. At Ballygiblin National School, we aim to promote healthy eating choices and habits from an early age. Circular 13/2016 *The Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Primary Schools* highlights the importance of physical activity in schools in conjunction with healthy eating.

While regulating food intake is not the role of the school, we strongly support healthy practices through the promotion of balanced lunches, snacks, and physical activity. This policy is informed by the *Healthy Food for Life – Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid* and was developed with input from a qualified dietician.

The school educates pupils about nutrition through the SPHE and SESE Science curricula.

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### SCHOOL HOT MEAL PROGRAMME

All pupils in Ballygiblin National School are provided with a healthy hot meal each day under the Department of Social Protection Hot School Meals Scheme. The current meal provider is Fitzgerald's Butchers in Ballyporeen.

Parents are encouraged to select menu options that reflect the principles of this Healthy Eating Policy. If you have any questions about the hot meal options or ordering, you can contact Fitzgerald's Butchers directly at [admin@ffb.ie](mailto:admin@ffb.ie).

Pupils are also welcome to bring a small healthy snack for morning break in addition to their hot lunch.

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### LUNCH AND BREAKS

A healthy lunchbox should contain some or all of the following (*adapted from safefood.net*):

#### **Bread and Cereals**

- Sandwiches, wrap, roll, pitta, crackers (wholemeal is healthiest)

## **Meat / Meat Alternatives**

- 2 slices of cooked meat, egg, fish, hummus

## **Fruit and Vegetables**

- 1 medium-sized fruit (e.g., apple) or 2 small fruits (e.g., plums), dried fruit, carrot sticks

## **Dairy**

- Low-fat yoghurt, cheese

## **Drinks**

- Water only throughout the day
- Unsweetened fruit juice or milk may be consumed with food at break times

Parents should ensure their child has an appropriate portion size for their needs and that lunch is packed securely. All uneaten food, wrappers, and cartons must be returned home in the lunch box.

Children are encouraged to bring a refillable bottle of water daily to support hydration and concentration.

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## **ALLERGIES**

Some children have serious nut allergies. No nuts or nut-containing products are permitted, including Nutella, some cereal bars, and nut butters. Parents are responsible for ensuring foods are nut-free and for checking labels carefully.

To minimise risks:

- **No sharing of lunches** is allowed.
- **Birthday cakes and treats are not permitted in school.**

Parents of children with medically prescribed diets (e.g., coeliac disease, diabetes) are asked to inform the school so that appropriate accommodations can be considered.

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## **FOODS TO BE DISCOURAGED**

The following foods are known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives, and preservatives. These should **not be brought to school**:

- All chocolate spreads

- Chocolate bars (except permitted fun-size treats on Fridays)
- Chocolate croissants
- Sweets, lollipops (except permitted fun-size treats on Fridays)
- Cakes, biscuits
- Sweetened fruit juice
- Fizzy drinks
- Crisps and similar products
- Popcorn
- Fruit winders
- High sugar cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fast food (sausage rolls, nuggets, hot dogs, etc.)

If deemed necessary by the class teacher, unsuitable food will be sent home.

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## FRIDAY TREATS

**One small treat is permitted on Fridays only.** Suitable examples include:

 <b>Permitted Friday Treats</b>	 <b>Not Permitted</b>
1 fun-size chocolate bar (e.g., Freddo)	Standard/large chocolate bars
1 fun-size jellies pack (e.g. Haribo)	Crisps, popcorn
2 plain biscuits	Large sweets or lollipops
Mini muffin	
Yoghurt-covered rice cakes	

End-of-term treat days may be organised at the teacher's discretion. Teachers will communicate this in advance.

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## IMPLEMENTATION

Foods in breach of this policy should not be consumed in school. They will be returned home. Where concerns arise about ongoing difficulties in following the policy, the Principal or Deputy Principal will contact parents to offer support and guidance.

## **PARENTS' SUPPORT**

Informing your child about the importance of healthy eating will greatly support positive choices. Preparing lunch together can be an enjoyable family activity.

Further information about healthy eating and balanced diets can be found at [www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net).

As a Green School committed to environmental awareness, we encourage parents to:

- Use reusable or compostable containers.
- Avoid tin foil and single-use plastic bags.
- Bring all packaging home where possible.

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## **PROMOTION IN SCHOOL**

Our aim is to promote and encourage healthy eating positively and supportively, by praising and celebrating healthy lunches rather than focusing on highlighting unhealthy ones.

- Teachers will acknowledge and encourage healthy food choices.
- A “Healthy Eater of the Month” will be selected and recognised at assemblies.
- Rewards for positive behaviour will prioritise activities over treats (e.g., extra yard time, movement breaks).
- Pupils will learn about nutrition through SPHE and Science.
- The school will participate in initiatives such as *Food Dudes* and *Taste it Tuesday*.

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## **COMMUNICATION**

This policy will be communicated to all families annually and published on the school website. Feedback is welcome from parents and the Ballygiblin Parents' Association.

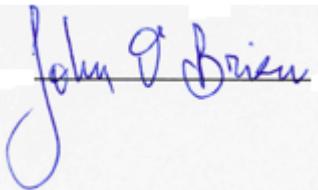
Any parent wishing to discuss any aspect of this policy is welcome to contact the Principal.

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## **POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if necessary.

**Signatures**

	
<b><i>John O'Brien</i></b>	<b><i>David Hyland</i></b>
<b><i>Chairperson BOM</i></b>	<b><i>Principal</i></b>
<b><i>Date: 18/11/2025</i></b>	<b><i>Date: 18/11/2025</i></b>