

Claddaghduff National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement:

“Children’s eating habits will strongly influence his/her chances of living a healthy life-style”. It is intended to encourage children to get into good dietary habits. 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 was formulated as a result of a review and updating of our original ‘nutrition’ policy. A copy of this policy will be kept in the school office and may be reviewed upon request.

Rationale:

Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community: children, families and teachers. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in Claddaghduff N.S.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

As part of our overall school policy the Healthy Eating Policy helps to promote the health of each child and to provide a foundation for healthy living. Our school aims to provide a holistic education for our children and health of mind and body is an ideal we aim for in all our pupils.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy

- To promote a whole school approach to health eating and nutrition.
- To develop an awareness that good eating habits formed in early childhood influence health and wellbeing throughout our lives.
- To develop awareness of the importance of food for growth and development.
- To explore food preferences in a balanced diet.

Objectives

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, developing and staying healthy.
- To enable each child to accept some responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Curriculum links

There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum to learn about the importance of a healthy diet.

- 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.
- Healthy food and nutrition forms part of the science curriculum.
- In keeping with our Green Schools status, all food packaging and uneaten food must be taken home.

Lunch

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide 1/3 of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients, without being high in fat, sugar or salt. However, we cannot stress enough the importance of the children getting a good breakfast each morning before they come to school. This will give your child the energy needed to concentrate and learn. Research has shown that children benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating a healthy breakfast.

A lot of our children are availing of the FreshToday School Lunches – a morning snack and a lunch. All options are approved from a nutritional standpoint but please ensure you select lunch options that your child will eat. If receiving FreshToday lunch, there is no need for an extra lunch to be provided by parents. If your child no longer requires the FreshToday lunch, please choose the no lunch option on the menu or contact the office to cancel.

For those not availing of the free lunch scheme the first break in the morning is ten minutes so children should be provided with a small healthy snack for this break, ideally a small sandwich or piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped for younger children.

At the second break children have ten minutes to eat (younger children may need longer) before they go out onto the yard. Ideally, children's lunches should be varied and include:

- Two portions from the bread/cereal group
- One portion of meat or meat alternative
- At least one portion from the fruit and vegetable group
- One portion from the dairy product group (please do not send in yogurts that are high in sugar e.g. yogurts with added chocolate/sweets/fudge pieces)
- Drinks are only to be water or milk (water is to be still and preferably not mixed with any flavourings or squashes)

Special Treats

On specific days during the school year children will be permitted special treat:

- End of term parties
- School trips
- **Friday treat day** – children may bring in **one small** treat on Fridays. This may include biscuit, **small** bar or cake, etc. (Teachers will remind children that this is an “occasional treat” and not “every day food”.)

Food items not permitted in school lunches:

- Any drinks apart from still, unflavoured water and milk
- Chewing gum
- Chocolate (including chocolate spread/Nutella)
- Sweets
- Crisps
- Chocolate cereal bars (some cereal bars are very high in sugar)

If any of the above foods are brought to school children will be asked to bring them home.

Best Practice:

- Ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast
- Provide small, regular meals, rather than one big meal each day
- Children who take regular physical exercise will have a better appetite for healthy food
- Serve brown bread instead of white
- Cut rolls/wraps/sandwiches into manageable sizes
- Be aware that some young children may not be able to manage things in their lunch boxes e.g. Frubes/yogurts
- Children will bring home any uneaten food so parents can see what their children have and have not eaten

Implementation:

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as they are not permitted to eat “junk” in school.

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. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

Success Criteria:

We will know the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods
- The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff
- The level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom

Roles and Responsibility:

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include variety.

Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others.

Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits.

The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, 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

Timeframe for Implementation:

15th June 2022

Timeframe for review:

3 years

Ratification and Communication:

The BoM ratified the policy at its meeting on 15th June 2022. The policy has been communicated to all staff and children and is available for view and is available for view in our office upon request and on our website.

Chairperson:  Date: 15th June 2022

Principal:  Date: 15th June 2022

Useful links with ideas for healthy lunches:

- <https://www.safefood.net/education/healthy-lunchboxes>
- <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/healthy-lunch-box-to-grow-learn-and-play-part-1.html>