



Healthy Eating Policy

Food and drink are an essential part of our daily lives. They play a fundamental role in the development of the human being. Making the right choices to support our nutrition requirements supports our physiological needs, and also contributes to our mental and emotional development. What we eat and drink is directly related to our state of health.

As our school is now a part of the Health Promoting Schools initiative, we have examined our Healthy Eating Policy and the following changes were made. Please bear in mind that all changes are being made in line with current recommendations from the Department of Health. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme in school, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children.

Aims of this policy:

- To promote the personal development and well being of the child.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide approximately one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a refillable bottle of water to school each day.

The Healthy Lunch Guidelines

Children in each class were asked to discuss what they thought should be in a healthy lunch. From these discussions the following guidelines emerged.

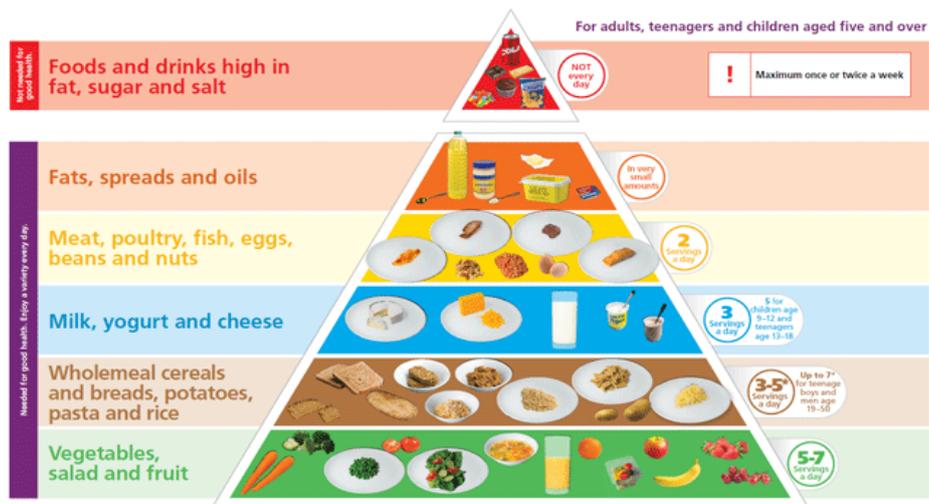
What is a healthy lunch? A healthy lunch contains foods which:

- Gives us strength and energy
- Makes us fit and healthy
- Helps our brain power
- Contains food with no added sugar, because too much sugar is bad for your teeth and health.
- Contains no artificial colourings, flavourings or additives.

What could be in a healthy lunch?

- Sandwiches, rolls, soda bread, bagels, wraps etc with cheese, meat, fish, eggs and salad.
- Pitta bread, scones, unsalted plain or whole-wheat crackers, oatcakes, breadsticks, plain rice cakes (not chocolate flavoured)
- Fruit (peeled and chopped for small children)
- Healthy dips, hummus, beans, seeds, nuts*, unsalted popcorn and pretzels
- Vegetables (washed and chopped), soup
- Pasta and rice
- Salad
- Yoghurt (natural or fruit)

*as there are some children who may be allergic to nuts, please check with your child's classroom teacher.



(Any helpful suggestions/ideas to add to this list would be very welcome)

What should not be in a healthy lunch?

- Crisps, salted nuts
- Chocolate, sweets, bars including cereal bars, winders, lollipops, jellies or other similar foods.
- Chewing gum
- Cake, biscuits, pastries, doughnuts etc
- Chocolate spread
- Flavoured milks and yogurt type desserts such as Muller corners, as these are high in sugar.

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?

- Water
- Milk

What drinks should not be allowed?

- Fizzy drinks
- Sugary drinks, sweetened juices and sweetened waters

Who should make sure everyone follows these guidelines?

- Our parents, because they make our lunch and should set a good example. They are responsible for our health.
- We should, because it's our health and we want to be fit and full of energy.
- Teachers, because they can see what's in our lunch boxes and know who's eating the right foods every day.
- The Principal

What should we do when children bring in foods not allowed?

- The children bring the food/drink home in their lunch box.

Should we make exceptions for special occasions?

- Yes, for treats after special occasions in our school such as Graduation Day, Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Yes, for end of term parties but please restrict it to one small treat per child.
- No, for school trips (in case we get sick on the bus)
- No, we cannot have children's birthday parties in school.

The purpose of making healthy food choices enables children to attain their optimum growth, development and health potential. The children of Scoil Mhuire are very keen to have healthy lunches and show a good understanding of what that means. We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices.

Ratification of Policy:

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 29th January 2018.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

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