

Ballinderreen N.S. Healthy Eating Policy



Rationale:

A healthy eating policy enables schools to develop and maintain a shared philosophy on all aspects of food and drink, including

1. Developing consistent messages about healthy eating across the curriculum.
2. Ensuring consistency between the messages within the curriculum and food available in the school.
3. Ensuring food provision at school is in line with healthy eating guidelines e.g. breakfast club, school meals, water consumption.
4. Creating a positive eating environment, both social and physical, at mealtimes.

At the request of the Board of Management it was decided to use the Healthy Eating Policy toolkit formulated by the HSE to guide and support our school review and improve our policy with an emphasis on the statements of effective practice outlined in the Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023.

1. The school environment is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices. Drinking water is freely available and rewards other than food are used to motivate children and young people.
2. The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school's ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.
3. Opportunities are provided for children, staff and parents to have an active voice in decisions relating to school improvement.
4. Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.

Aims

To take a whole school approach to healthy eating in school, in relation to: the Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching and Learning), Policy and Planning, Relationships and Partnerships.

To promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum.

Objectives

To enable children 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 Breaks

There are two lunch breaks over the course of the school day.

1. Sos Beag – (10 mins) Children are encouraged to eat some lunch at this break. Children are not permitted to bring lunch to yard.
2. Lón (30 mins)–Children eat lunch before going to yard for big break.

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. Teachers will encourage children to eat their lunch before going to yard. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children.

Healthy Food for Life www.healthyeireland.ie 

The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

Not needed for good health. Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt **NOT every day** **Maximum once or twice a week**

Needed for good health. Enjoy a variety every day.

- Fats, spreads and oils** (In very small amounts)
- Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts** (2 Servings a day)
- Milk, yogurt and cheese** (3 Servings a day) 5 for children age 9-12 and teenagers age 13-16
- Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice** (3-5 Servings a day) Up to 7* for teenage boys and men age 19-50
- Vegetables, salad and fruit** (5-7 Servings a day)

*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

	Child (5-12)	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (13-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)
Active	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
Inactive	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Source: Department of Health December 2016

Get Active! To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best

The following is a suggestive list and not exhaustive

- Pick a protein** – protein can be found in many foods, so don't feel limited to deli meat and tuna. Consider cheese, grilled or steamed chicken or turkey, hard boiled eggs and plant proteins such as beans, peas, lentils and chickpeas
- Pick a carbohydrate** – Sandwiches can get monotonous everyday. To keep your child interested in lunchtime, try and mix it up with wholegrain crackers, pitta, bagels, wraps, rice and pasta salads.
- Pick a vegetable (and a dip)** – Carrot sticks, celery, cucumber, green beans, sweet peppers, cherry tomatoes
- Pick a fruit** – As well as offering nutrition, fruits also rehydrate and fulfil that sweet craving which is important. E.g. apples, oranges, bananas or grapes

Pupils must take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons, put only fruit peel into the compost bins and not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons

Green Flag School

As we are a Green School the children are asked to:

1. use paper lunch bags or reusable lunch boxes.
2. use reusable beakers/ drink containers.
3. not to use cling film or tinfoil.
4. not to bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.
5. take home all uneaten food and put only fruit peel into the compost bins.

Dental Health

Dental health and disease prevention is important so children are encouraged to drink water, not juices or diluted fruit drinks during the school day. We acknowledge the importance of brushing twice a day and lessons will be taught in each class on dental health and efforts will be made to organise visits from a dentist/ hygienist to encourage good dental care and hygiene awareness.

Physical Activity

All children are encouraged to participate in lunch time activities in the school playground. The children will receive minimum-one hour of physical activity per week as part of the physical education curriculum. The school will provide physical and social environments that encourage and enable physical activity in a safe environment. A sports for all day will be held in the final term. The school promotes participation in local competitions- eg Cumann na mBunscoil, basketball, soccer, track and field, tag rugby and cross country. The school promotes sport and physical activity- by providing information on sports clubs and physical activity opportunities within the community. The school was awarded an Active Flag to highlight the schools excellence in Physical Education.

School Garden

The aim of the school garden is to reconnect students with the natural world and the true source of their food, and teach them valuable gardening and agriculture concepts and skills that integrate with several subjects, such as math, science, art, health and physical education, as well as several educational goals, including personal and social responsibility. The aim is for students to become more fit and healthy as they spend more time active in the outdoors and start choosing healthy foods over junk food. Each class has access to a planter bed which is used to grow fruit and vegetables.

Mental Health

The school recognises the importance of mental health and how it is an integral component of general health and well-being, allowing a person to fully realise his/her abilities.

The school promotes mental health education and has an Anti-Bullying Policy in place. Mental Health month takes place in February each year. S.P.H.E., Stay Safe and Relationship and Sexual Education Programmes are taught in the school.

To help highlight the awareness of Healthy Lifestyles the following takes/will take place

1. Teachers and children will discuss healthy eating and physical activity each term.
2. Our Healthy School Policy will be displayed where it is clearly visible to teachers students and parents.
3. Teachers will provide supportive attitudes to encourage Healthy Eating.
4. All pupils will be encouraged to participate in plenty of physical activity with a variety of active play equipment available for use in the school.
5. Staff members will be encouraged to attend in-service courses and to participate in other forms of continuous professional development appropriate to their needs.
6. A Sports ay for all will be held in the final term which will emphasise games that encourage participation rather than placing an emphasis on winning.
7. Active week will be held in Term 3

Children with medical conditions or allergies

Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet **or** whose child has a food allergy should contact the school in writing with details. A record of all children with underlying medical conditions and food allergies is kept at the school. This record is reviewed annually. At the beginning of each school year an email is sent to all parents/guardians informing them of any child/children in their child's class with a specific food intolerance or allergy. Parents will be asked to exclude these food items from their child's lunch boxes.

Treat Day/Special Occasions

Teachers may give treats as a reward or on special occasions at their own discretion.

The Lunch Bag

Parents also have the opportunity to use the 'Lunch Bag' service. Parents are in complete control of the ordering process for their child through 'The Lunch Bag' app. All of the items ordered by you through the app are delivered to the school in a brown paper bag with the child's name, for the school to distribute. Please visit www.lunchbag.ie for more information on how to use the app. If a parent/guardian experiences any problems, you should contact the Lunch Bag customer service team on 0433362038.

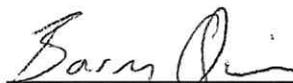
Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy.

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing this policy. This policy will be reviewed in 2028 in consultation with staff and parents.

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on February 13th 2023.



Chairperson



Principal