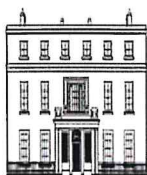




Healthy Eating Policy

June 2023



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DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION AND SKILLS



Introduction:

This policy was formulated after consultation with teachers, pupils and parents of Mercy Convent Primary School. We focused on this policy to support parents and pupils around developing healthy eating habits at an early age, to develop positive and responsible attitudes to eating, and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to one's health

Aims:

In general, the broad aims of this healthy eating policy are to:

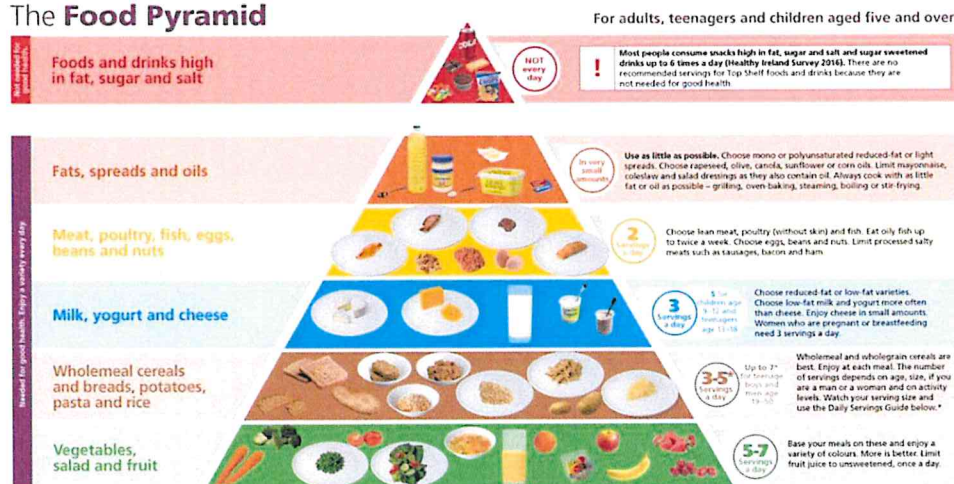
- To encourage healthy eating habits
- To support parents and children make healthy enjoyable decisions around food
- To help children understand the link between a healthy diet and a healthy, active lifestyle
- To educate children for living and for life
- To maintain a nut free school status

Healthy Lunch options:

We encourage children to choose from the following foods regularly:

Snacks	Drinks
whole-meal muffins, raisins, flapjacks, raw vegetables, fruit, seeds, dried fruit, fruit yoghurts, crackers, fromage frais or bread	Water and milk
Carbohydrates	Fillings
Whole-grain breads, rolls, bagels, wraps, oatcakes, crackers, pasta, rice or rice cakes	Cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, coleslaw or salad
Fruit	Raw Vegetables
Apple, orange, banana, grape, pear, plum, kiwi, melon, grapefruit, pineapple etc.	carrots, peppers, cucumber, broccoli, tomatoes, sweetcorn etc.

The Food Pyramid



In our school we allow a treat on a Friday only and it is up to parents to decide whether or not they wish to give their children a treat. As with all food groups, appropriate portion size should be considered regarding the Friday treat. For example, funsize chocolate bars compared to standard one.

Foods that we do not encourage:

- Sweets (except as a Friday treat)
- Frubes (in infant classes)
- Chewing Gum
- Lollipops
- Crisps
- Fizzy drinks
- **Nuts and products containing nuts**
- Chocolate spread
- Cereal bars due to the high sugar content (except as a Friday treat)
- Chocolate or Chocolate bars (except as a Friday treat)
- Biscuits (except as a Friday treat)
- Cakes, buns and pastries (except as a Friday treat)
- Hot drinks
- Coated rice cakes (except as a Friday treat)
- Brioche

If children bring any of the above foods or drink into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home.

Exceptions may occur for the following reasons (but should apply sparingly):

- Celebratory Days such as Hallowe'en/ Easter/ Christmas holidays, sports day, school trip etc.
- Reward treats may be given to pupils for collective/ individual achievements.

Special Dietary/ Medical Requirements:

Parents of children with special dietary requirements are required to make an appointment with a member of school management to discuss the implications of this policy.

Packing the Lunch Box:

Children's portion sizes have gotten bigger over the last number of years. Children should be able to eat their lunches in a reasonable amount of time. Children should be able to unwrap and eat their lunches by themselves. It is not possible for teachers to open lunches in a classroom full of children. Please help by not giving products that they cannot open themselves e.g. foods with wrappers, unpeeled oranges etc. To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g. fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and

sandwiches cut). Parents must ensure that lunch boxes contain whatever utensils are require.

As we are trying to reduce the amount of waste in the school, parents are encouraged to reduce the amount of packaging in their child's lunch box.

Cans and glass bottles are not permitted for safety and litter reasons.

Drinking Plenty of Water

Water is essential for life. Through perspiration (sweating), the body uses water to lower body temperature when it is warm. Regular drinks are necessary to replace fluid lost during the day. Without enough water or fluid in the short-term, the dehydration that results causes tiredness. Water is a tooth friendly drink. The more active a person is, the more fluid is needed to replace fluid lost as sweat. In hot weather, or if playing sports, children should bring extra water to school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of parents

- Provide a healthy well balanced lunch for children
- To encourage healthy eating
- To inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To support the school in implementing the schools Healthy Eating Policy

Role of children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch and packaging
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Eating Policy

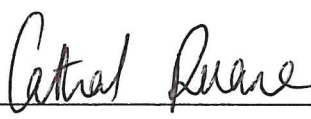
Role of school:

- The staff will encourage healthy eating
- The staff will educate the children in Health Education
- Children will be encourage to participate in sporting activities
- Food can only be eaten before and after break time
- Food may not be eaten in the toilets or taken out on yard
- Class teachers will ask children to take uneaten lunch and packaging home.
- All school staff will be asked to observe the nut free school status
- All school staff will refer to the healthy eating poster in their respective classrooms
- Where teachers use treats as rewards they should only do so on Fridays and end of term days.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 2023.

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 
Principal

Date: 27 June 2023

Date: 27 June 2023

Date of next Review: May 2026

Useful Information:

Healthy Eating – School Lunchboxes: <https://www.safefood.net/family-health/school-lunchbox>

How much sugar? <https://www.hollandandbarrett.ie/the-health-hub/food-drink/how-much-sugar-should-you-have-a-day/>

HSE: How to eat well: <https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/healthy-eating/how-to-eat-well/>