



Healthy Eating Policy 2021

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at *Holy Family Primary School, Glenbrien* we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy a number of years ago. This policy was revised in September 2021 with teachers, parents, pupils, Parents' Association and the Board of Management involved in the formation of the new policy. Each year, we host a **Healthy Eating Week** in September which encourages all pupils to bring a balanced, healthy lunch to school each day. At the beginning of the 2nd term, lessons relating to Healthy Eating are taught in all classes and the Parents' Association hosts a **Healthy Breakfast Morning** for all pupils. All classes will participate in the **Food Dudes Programme** at least twice during their time from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

Aims

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

Objectives

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. 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 one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

However, we cannot stress enough the importance of the children getting a good breakfast each morning before they come to school. Breakfast is perhaps the most important meal of the day. Not only does breakfast break the child's long overnight fast and help concentration, it also lays down the foundation for healthy eating for the rest of the day. Breakfast should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

Children form their eating habits for life from an early age. A good diet and plenty of sleep, fresh air and exercise are essential to the growing child. All Classes get 15 minutes of their 30 minutes lunch break (12.30-12.45) to eat their lunch before they enter the yard. This is in line with the Department of Education's Time allocation for recreation in the Primary School Day

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. **We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.**

Lunch suggestions from Food & Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools available from www.healthinfo.ie

To encourage independence, we ask you to choose lunch boxes children can open and close easily. Children should be able to manage food as well, e.g. oranges should be peeled at home and children should be able to open/ close all other wrapping themselves. Children should not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons. We discourage pupils from swapping or sharing lunches. If your child has a food allergy please inform teacher.

Healthy Lunches

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children. *Children are encouraged not to share lunches in school.*

Bread & Alternatives Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal Rice – wholegrain Pasta – wholegrain Potato Salad Wholemeal Scones Bread sticks Crackers Pitta bread Rice Cakes (Plain)	Savouries Lean Meat Chicken/Turkey Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines Cheese Vegetarian Sausage Quiche
Fruit & Vegetables Fruit, Berries Fruit Salad Carrots, Cucumber, Tomato Peppers, Sugar Snaps, Soup Mangetout, Sweetcorn, Coleslaw Seeds (Sunflower, Pumpkin, sesame)	Drinks Milk Water

A word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese or yoghurt. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt, a yoghurt drink or a small helping of cheese instead.

We ask that children do not bring the following to school:

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

Friday will be our treat day.

The children are encouraged to eat the treat AFTER their lunch is eaten at 12.30pm.

On this day, children can bring ONE of the following:

- Treat/ fun sized bar
- Treat/ fun sized bag of sweets
- Small biscuit
- Small cereal bar (preferably homemade)
- Small home bakes

Green Flag School

Our green school motto is:

'GET GREEN, KEEP GREEN, MAKE IT INTO A REGULAR ROUTINE!'

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

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

N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.

Promotion of the Policy:

All members of the teaching staff promote this policy through regular verbal reminders and good example to the children.

If children bring "discouraged" food / drinks to school: - They will be reminded not to bring them on other days.

If they persist in bringing unhealthy food to school, the teacher will inform parents re. Healthy Eating Policy throughout the school

Exceptions

Exceptions are allowed:

- ✓ End of term celebrations
- ✓ School trips
- ✓ Specific School Achievement Celebrations

This revised policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **6/ 10/21**

Signed: **Fr John Byrne** Signed: **Fiona Cleere**
Chairperson of Board of Management Secretary/Principal

Date: **6/ 10/21** Date: **6/ 10/21**

Date of next review: September 2023