



Pelletstown Educate Together National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Date of Ratification: 25th March 2021

Date for Review: March 2024

Introduction

This policy was formulated to provide guidelines on Health Eating in the school with consultation from pupils, parents and staff. It was originally written in September 2015 and was reviewed and updated in March 2021.

Rationale

“Schools are an ideal setting to promote good nutrition as they have been shown to have a positive impact on eating behaviours of young people”, (World Health Organisation 1998).

Good nutrition is critical for every child's short and long term health and development. Healthy eating habits are learned during childhood and can help reduce the risk of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, anaemia and bad dental health throughout their life. At Pelletstown Educate Together National School, we believe a healthy eating policy is fundamental, not only to add life to years but also to add years to life. Our policy outlines our school's commitment to promote healthy eating. It promotes the importance of good nutrition practices. This policy aims to support parents/carers and pupils around developing healthy eating habits at an early age.

Aims:

The aims of this policy are:

1. to promote nutritional awareness and provide consistent messages about nutrition through classroom education.
2. to provide members of the school community, staff, parents/carers and pupils with clear information on healthy eating.
3. to support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which we hope will become lifelong.
4. to promote the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.
5. to support the school's environmental policy e.g. re-usable containers and minimising wrappers, sourcing food locally etc.
6. to help improve children's concentration, learning and energy levels.
7. to support parents/carers and children in making healthy and enjoyable decisions around food by providing nutritional information as well as information around hand hygiene

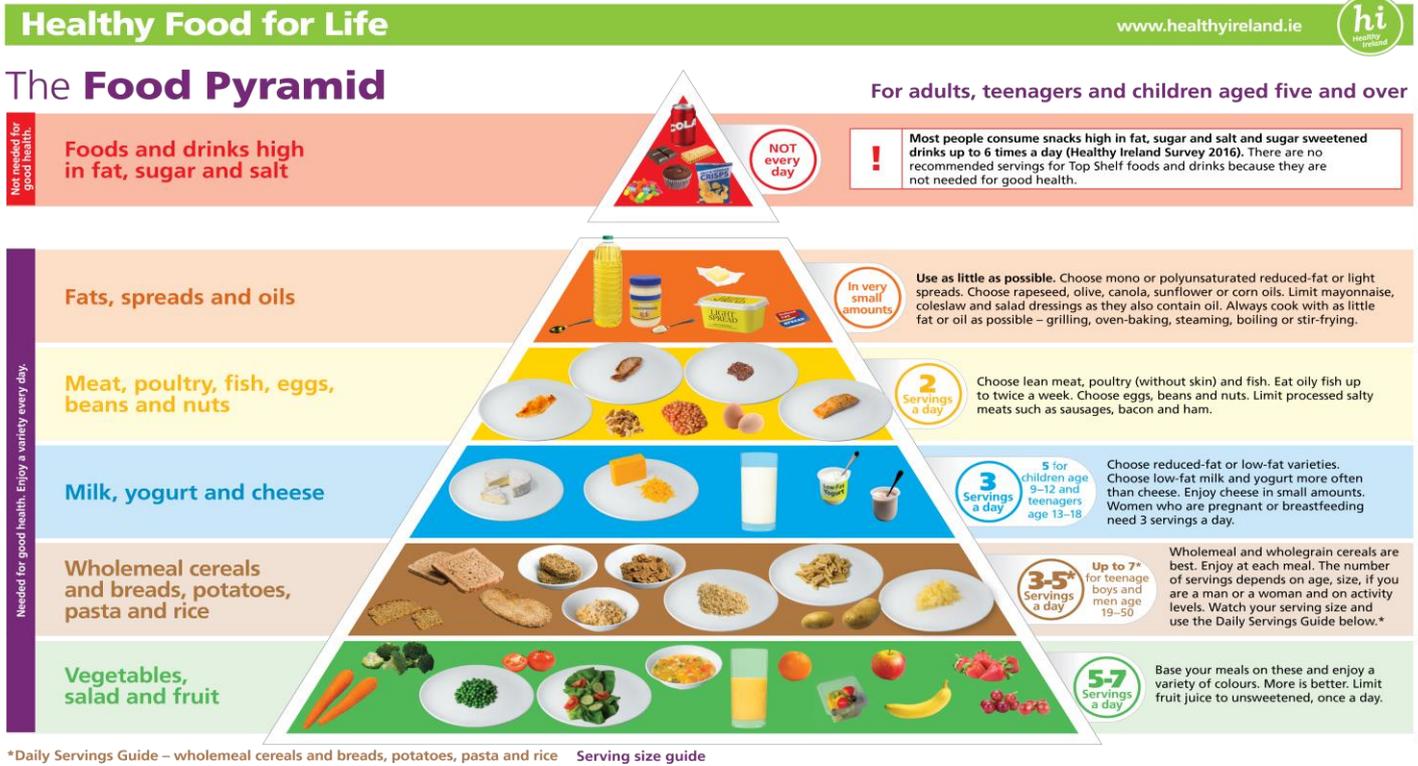
Curriculum Integration:

- **S.P.H.E:** Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition
- **Science:** Myself: Human Life Processes
- **P.E:** Promoting a healthy, active lifestyle

Guidelines:

1. Contents

A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of food shelves from the food pyramid. These are indicated below:



The following is a **sample** 5 day lunch box planner from Safe Food – Healthy Lunchboxes

5-DAY LUNCHBOX PLANNER

We often end up putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchbox contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following planner shows you the potential variety you can have.

MONDAY				
1 medium bread roll with chicken and lettuce	+	Banana	+	Handful of carrot sticks + Pot of low fat yoghurt
TUESDAY				
Small pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn	+	Orange	+	½ wholemeal scone + Banana + Carton of milk
WEDNESDAY				
2 tablespoons of cous-cous with 1 tablespoon of dried fruit	+	Grapes	+	2 crackers with low fat cheddar cheese + Carton of unsweetened fruit juice
THURSDAY				
2 slices of bread with cooked ham and lettuce	+	Small container of fruit in its own juice	+	Apple + Yoghurt + Water
FRIDAY				
Tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce	+	Kiwi	+	Small tub of stewed fruit + Small slice of fruit cake + Milk

Note:
 1. Lunchbox planner includes snack and lunch items
 2. Smaller portions for smaller people
 3. Use low fat spread, low fat mayonnaise or relish instead of full fat options

2. **NB: There is a total ban on all nuts and nut-based products (including peanut butter, chocolate spread, any cereal bars with nuts, drinks containing nut products e.g. almond milk) because of the serious allergies of some pupils in the school.** (If your child has a suspected nut-based product for their lunch, they will be asked to take this home, along with the note at Appendix 1)
3. Parents are asked, when choosing lunches, **not** to include the following items:
 - crisps/plantain
 - sweets
 - chocolate bars
 - biscuits
 - cakes/buns
 - fizzy drinks/energy drinks
 (If your child has an unhealthy food item for their lunch, they will be asked to take this home, along with the note at Appendix 2. If this is repeated a number of times, the class teacher will refer the matter to the Assistant Principal)
4. Please note lollipops, chewing gum and hot liquids (including tea/coffee/herbal tea) are not allowed for all pupils for safety reasons. Popcorn is not allowed for Junior Infants – Senior Infants for safety reasons as it may present a choking hazard. Pupils from 1st – 6th Class are permitted to have popcorn for their lunch. All pupils are reminded to eat slowly and safely for reasons of health and safety.
5. The school has two lunch breaks. Please ensure your child has enough nourishing food and drinks for both breaks, including a snack for the first break and something more substantial for the second break. To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g. fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut into manageable sizes), particularly for infant classes. P
6. Children must take responsibility for eating and cleaning up after themselves appropriately. If there is a persistent difficulty with this, teachers may request a meeting with parents to discuss alternative lunch options.
7. Children are requested to take home all uneaten food so that parents/carers know if the quantity they are sending is too large or if the child does not like a particular food. Uneaten food may not be thrown in the bin. Children are asked to wash out yoghurt tubs to be recycled or used in junk art.
8. Children are not allowed to swap or share items from their lunch.
9. If treats are brought in on any day, the children will be asked to take it home.
10. Cultural and religious and dietary habits are respected. Parents or carers are requested to provide details of foods not eaten by the child for these reasons.
11. In the interest of fairness, and for allergy, religious and health reasons, **we cannot host birthday parties at school.** If parents/carers wish, children should celebrate their birthdays at home with their families/friends. Please refrain from sending in birthday cakes/treats to school. We will, of course, sing 'Happy Birthday' for your child on the big day, if they would like us to, and generally make a fuss of them!
12. We hope in time to become a Green Flag School. In keeping with this and with the aim of reducing waste, please remove all packaging from food whenever you can. Instead, we encourage the use of re-usable containers, flasks, beakers etc. Glass bottles and cans are not allowed.
13. Sweets **will not** be used as rewards at school.

14. Liquids should always be included in a packed lunch. Water bottles can be refilled using filtered water taps in the classrooms. Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children. Because of its natural sugar content, unsweetened fruit juice (**i.e. only 100% fruit juice**) should only be consumed with meals. Sweetened fruit juice is not tooth-friendly so is **not allowed** in school.

Exceptions:

During the school year, treats will be organised by school staff from time to time, on special occasions e.g. cinema days, school trips, baking days etc. On these days, all pupils will receive the same treats, thus eliminating the opportunity for comparing treats and any teasing or unkind words. Careful attention will be given to any dietary requirements, food allergies or religious observances when selecting treats for the pupils. After school clubs hosted by staff may wish to organise treats on special occasions and will abide by this policy.

Resources

The following websites provide useful information and tips on healthy lunches:

- www.safefood.eu
- www.healthpromotion.ie/health/healthy_eating
- www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/

Other Tips and Hints

- Keep lunches in fridge if made the night before
- Use a small insulated cool bag especially in warmer weather
 - Cut sandwiches into small manageable portions especially for younger children
- Peel fruit for younger children
- Avoid items that children cannot eat without assistance
- Try to give a variety of foods
- Vary the types of bread (wholemeal, granary, high fibre rolls, bagels, pitta and sliced bread)

We appreciate that encouraging children to choose certain foods is not always easy. However, with the increase in obesity, type 2 diabetes and the prevalence of dental care needs, we are encouraging best practice especially during school hours. For this policy to be successful, we need support from the whole school community.

Food Allergies

If a child has a serious food allergy or a special dietary requirement, parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school and completing the yellow medical conditions/allergies form, and the administration of medication form, where necessary.

Please note guidelines above on Nut Ban and see Administration of Medication policy.

School Support

Our strong pastoral care ethic and the Educate Together key principle of child-centredness will ensure that no child goes hungry at school. If a child has forgotten their lunch, the school will contact their parents/carers to make arrangements for the delivery of their lunch. If this is not possible, the school will cater for the child.

All relevant curricular lessons which support this Healthy Eating Policy will be taught at all class levels (see '*Curriculum Integration*' section above)

Dissemination of Policy

The attention of all parents will be drawn to this policy when enrolling their child(ren) in the school. The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this policy upon their appointment to the school. This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association. Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from March 2021.

This policy will be reviewed in March 2024.

Ratification and Communication

The attention of all newly appointed staff will be drawn to this policy upon their appointment to the school by the NQT/Droichead mentor.

This policy will be published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron, if requested.

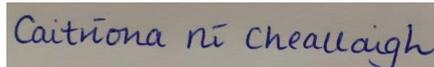
Hard copies of this, and all school policies, are available at the school on request.

This policy was ratified on 25th March 2021 by the Board of Management, with immediate effect.

Signature of Chairperson:



Signature of Principal:



Date: 25th March 2021

Appendix 1 – Note to parents/carers re: Nuts/Nut-Based Product



Date:

Dear parents/carers of:

Your child had the following food item(s) for lunch today, which we believe to contain nuts/be a nut-based product;

Your child was not allowed to consume this product and has been asked to take it home. Such food items are not allowed due to the severe nut allergies of some of our pupils. Please do not send these items to school again.

If there are no nuts in the above item(s), please clarify this with me by providing a list of ingredients, and please accept our apologies but we must take these precautions for health and safety reasons.

Many thanks,

Class Teacher



Appendix 2 – Note to parents/carers re: unhealthy lunches



Date:

Dear parents/carers of:

Your child had the following food item(s) for lunch today, which are not allowed in line with our healthy eating policy;

Please ensure that you provide healthy lunch options for your child. There are some suggestions below from Safe Food, and further information can be found in the school's Healthy Eating Policy.

Many thanks,

Class Teacher

5-DAY LUNCHBOX PLANNER

We often end up putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchbox contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following planner shows you the potential variety you can have.

MONDAY				
1 medium bread roll with chicken and lettuce	+		+	Handful of carrot sticks
	+		+	Pot of low fat yoghurt
	+		+	
TUESDAY				
Small pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn	+		+	½ wholemeal scone
	+		+	
	+		+	Carton of milk
WEDNESDAY				
2 tablespoons of cous-cous with 1 tablespoon of dried fruit	+		+	2 crackers with low fat cheddar cheese
	+		+	
	+		+	Carton of unsweetened fruit juice
THURSDAY				
2 slices of bread with cooked ham and lettuce	+	Small container of fruit in its own juice	+	
	+		+	Yoghurt
	+		+	
FRIDAY				
Tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce	+		+	Small tub of stewed fruit
	+		+	Small slice of fruit cake
	+		+	

Note:
 1. Lunchbox planner includes snack and lunch items
 2. Smaller portions for smaller people
 3. Use low fat spread, low fat mayonnaise or relish instead of full fat options

www.safefood.eu
HELPLINE
 NI 0800 085 1683
 ROI 1850 40 4567