



Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, St. Nicholas National School 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 (Type 2). A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life). It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that children have a healthy lunch at school daily.

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy starting from November, 2023

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. **However, we cannot stress enough the importance of the children getting a good breakfast each morning before they come to school.** Breakfast/ lunch should also provide dietary fibre (roughage). All classes get 10 minutes of their 40 minutes lunch break (2 breaks total) 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.

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

A word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. 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 or a small helping of cheese instead.

We would discourage the inclusion of the following items in lunchboxes

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

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Sugary drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, fruit juices, prime etc)
- Sweets
- Biscuits/bars (unless homemade)
- Cereal bars (unless homemade)
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn

The following items should never be included in lunchboxes

- Lollipops
- Chewing gum
- Prime Drinks

If these items are found in school they will be sent home in lunchboxes.

Healthy Eating Promotion

To promote healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:

Fats Sugar Sweets etc.	Sparingly
Meat, Fish Peas/Beans	2 portions per day
Milk, Cheese Yoghurt	3+ portions per day
Fruit & Vegetables	4+ portions per day
Bread, Cereals & Potatoes	6+ portions per day

Treat Day

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.
- Extra treats may be given out to celebrate a child's birthday

Green Flag School

We are a Green School.

Bearing 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
- do 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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 15th November 2023. It will be reviewed in September 2024 or sooner in light of any new allergies in our school.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: **15th November 2023**

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Ratified by BOM at meeting on **Wednesday 15th November.**

