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## **Healthy Eating Policy**

*As a primary school, we are also encouraged by the D.E.S and the Dept. of Health and Children, to promote healthy attitudes to food and eating in our school. We endeavour to do this by means of a Whole School Food Policy which is taught formally as part of the SPHE programme and in a practical manner by encouraging the children to bring healthy food for lunch. 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).*

### **Rationale**

Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School is dedicated to providing an environment that promotes healthy eating and enabling students to make informed choices. As educators, we are very conscious of the importance of children's diet and how it can impact on their health, concentration, development and well-being. As children spend a significant part of their day in school, it is important that we encourage and facilitate them to eat healthily during that time.

Many of the choices you make for your children today will influence their health in the future. One decision you make every day involves the choice and preparation of school lunches.

Healthy eating habits started in childhood, will stay with your children forever and influence their chances of a healthier life. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore, they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre.

*A Whole School Food Policy supports the role of parents in promoting a healthy lifestyle for their child.*

## **Aim**

The aims for our Whole School Food Policy in Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School are:

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.
3. To inculcate healthy attributes to food and eating at an early age.
4. To acknowledge the proven link between good nutrition and good learning.
5. To ensure everyone understands and supports healthy eating for living and learning.
6. To encourage the whole school community to make healthy food choices.

These aims will be addressed through the following objectives in the following key areas.

Apart from the well-known health and dental reasons for healthy lunches, research has shown that much of poor concentration and hyperactivity in children is caused by nutritional imbalances.

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).

## **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.
3. Through the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE), Physical Education and Science curriculum, Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School will promote lifelong healthy eating and positive lifestyle choices.

### **We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.**

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

#### **Breads & Alternatives**

*Bread or rolls,*

*Rice-wholegrain*

*Pasta*

#### **Savouries**

*Lean meat*

*Chicken/Turkey*

*Tinned fish e.g. tuna*

*Brown Bread*

*Cheese*

*Pitta bread*

*Quiche*

*Wraps*

*Oatcakes*

*Breadsticks.*

*Rice cakes.*

*Crackers*

### **Fruit & Vegetables**

*All types of fruit and vegetables are welcome, some*

*Ideas may include:*

*Apples, banana, peach, mandarins*

*Orange segments, fruit salad, dried fruit.*

*Grapes, plum.*

*Cucumber, sweetcorn.*

*Popcorn*

*Tomato, coleslaw.*

*Carrot sticks*

*Melon slices.*

### **Yoghurts**

*Plain or fruit yogurts are allowed.*

***Yogurts containing chocolate, biscuits or sweets are not allowed***

### **Foods not allowed in school**

***Chewing gum***

***Crisps.***

***Fizzy Drinks.***

### **Drinks**

*milk*

*water*

*sugar free dilute*

***Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies.***

***Cakes, buns, biscuits, pastries, chocolate pastries or doughnuts.***

***Cereal bars, fruit winders.***

### **Treat Day**

To encourage balance, Friday will be our treat day. On this day, children can include one food item from the 'not allowed' list (except chewing gum) if they wish to do so. The pupils will be allowed to bring 1 of the following

- a fun size treat bar
- treat size bag of sweets
- small bun or piece of cake
- treat yogurt
- cereal bar

During special occasions eg Christmas, Hallowe'en etc the children may receive a small treat from their teachers.

### **The Health Promotion Department recommend that a healthy lunchbox includes:**

- *At least two portions from the bread/cereals group.*
- *One portion from the meat and the meat alternatives group.*
- *2-3 portions from fruits and vegetables.*
- *One portion from the dairy products.*
- *It is important that parents review their child's lunch on a regular basis to ensure they have enough to eat.*

### **Green Flag School**

*Our green school motto is:*

*'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!!'*

*With this in mind, children are also asked to:*

- *take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, tinfoil, wrappings, containers and cartons*
- *put only fruit peel into the compost bins*
- *not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.*
- *Please be more mindful of food packaging and use reuseable containers where possible.*

### **Success Criteria**

*This policy will have achieved its goals if:*

- 1. The children enjoy healthy food in school.*
- 2. The children realise the contribution a good diet makes to their overall development, growth and general wellbeing.*
- 3. The policy gains general support from all the partners in Education involved in our school.*
- 4. The children develop healthy attitudes towards food and eating.*

### **Implementation**

***If the children bring prohibited food or drink into school it will be suggested not to bring this food again.***

*Note: Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition, which requires a special diet, should contact the school.*

**In the event of food allergies, certain foods will be prohibited for health and safety reasons. (If a child is enrolled with a specific severe food allergy it may be necessary to exclude this food)**

### **Policy and Planning**

- This Whole School Food Policy will be available to view in the school and on the school website.
- Children will be educated about healthy food, nutrition and lifestyle choices.
- The BOM will be updated on Healthy Eating events during the school year.

### **Key Measures**

The policy is being implemented through the following key measures:

- Healthy Eating covered as per SPHE curriculum
- Staff members encouraging healthy eating choice on an ongoing basis
- Staff attending staff up-skilling / training as appropriate
- **Implementation**
- The policy will be implemented as follows:  
**Who**
  - Staff will educate and facilitate opportunities for detailed learning on healthy eating and nutrition under the SPHE curriculum. All staff will encourage and remind pupils to make positive healthy eating choices.

- Parents will be mindful of the Whole School Food Policy of Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School when preparing children's lunches. Children will be provided with a balanced, nutritious lunch. Foods high in sugar, salt and fat will not be part of lunches.
- Communication will be made with parents of children who forget their lunch.
- Pupils will learn about the benefits of making healthy food choices.

#### Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde, Loreto N.S. on 27th March 2019. It will be reviewed when necessary.