

St Felim's National School



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Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

The Healthy Eating Policy was formulated following debate at the Parents' Association A.G.M., Staff Meetings and feedback from children. A group, comprising parents, B.O.M., teachers and Bernadette Moore (dietician), steered the launch of the policy in February 2010 and was reviewed at Easter 2010 following a survey. It was subsequently reviewed in 2018 and again in 2021 in consultation with the children, staff, parents, guardians and the Board of Management.

Rationale

This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents and guardians in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale, nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in St. Felim's N.S.

Vision

St. Felim's N.S. supports the view that good nutrition is central to a child's educational development. Evidence from existing studies shows that there is a significant positive relationship between improved dietary status and school performance. What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing the long term health of school children and staff. Through this policy St. Felim's N.S. aims to help all those involved in the school community e.g. children, staff, parents and guardians in developing positive responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health. We therefore aim to help the school community at St. Felim's N.S. make the healthier choice the easier choice.

Aims

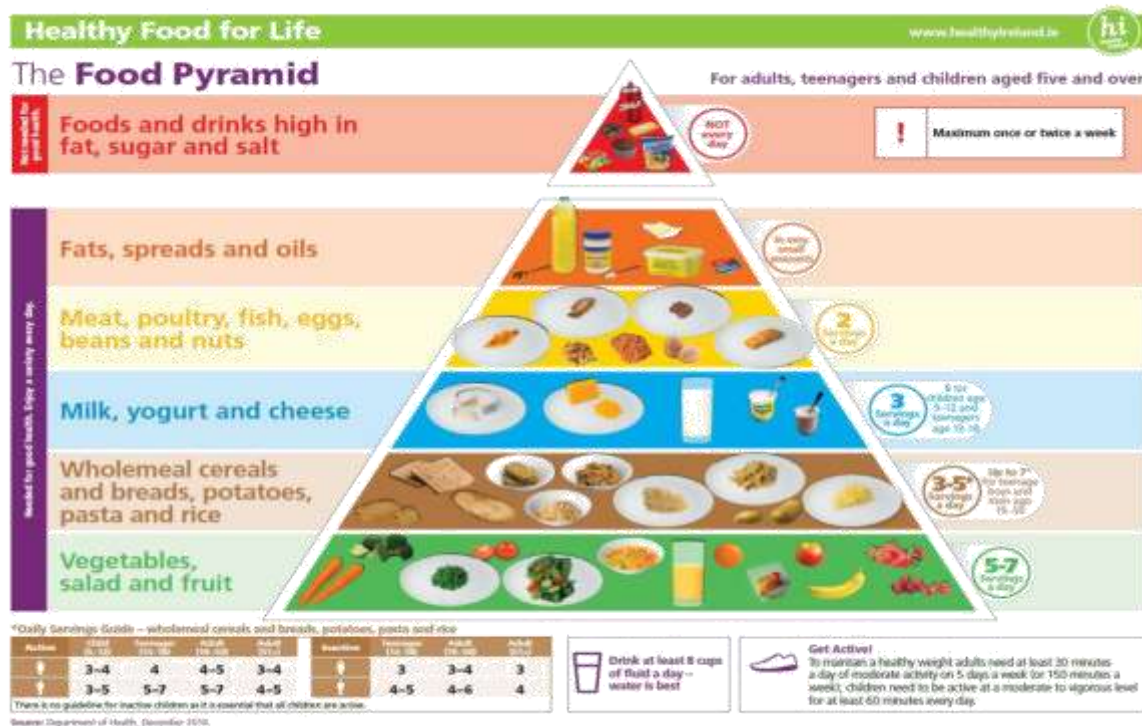
- To help all those involved in our school community, children, staff, parents and guardians, to develop positive attitudes to eating and healthy living.
- To promote 'the personal development and wellbeing of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. (SPHE Guidelines)
- To establish good eating habits at an early age as children have a right to learn about different foods so that they may make informed choices throughout their life.
- To promote making healthy food choices and thus enabling children to attain their optimum growth, development and health potential.
- To maintain a whole school approach within the context of SPHE so that children, parents, guardians and staff will learn about nutrition, healthy eating and healthy living.

- To enable the children to develop an understanding of healthy living and an ability to implement healthy behaviour and willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health. This includes physical activity.
- To develop a policy where, parents, guardians, children, teachers, school staff and the BOM will be involved in a collaborative way.
- To review these guidelines every three years.
- To ensure that all classes will receive a least 1 lesson on healthy eating each term.
- To ensure that school staff will provide supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
- To support parents and guardians in their role as Primary Educators by providing them with up to date information on healthy eating habits from the Dept. of Health.

Guidelines

The policy provides guidelines and recommendations in accordance with the most recent food pyramid so that informed choices are made when deciding which foods to include when making, balanced, nutritional lunches for children.

- Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate in school.
- A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid as outlined below.



A healthy lunch box includes:

1. At least 2 portions from the bread, cereals group.
2. One portion from the meat and the meat alternatives group.
3. 2/3 portions from fruits and vegetables.
4. One portion from the dairy products.
5. Drink e.g. water, milk, pure unsweetened juices or well diluted sugar free squashes

Healthy Choice Ideas

Sometimes it can be difficult to think of alternatives. Here are some tasty ideas:

- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, a handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, pepper and cucumber.
- Washed, raw vegetables (for example, cherry tomatoes)
- Half a tin of fruit (in its own juice)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Plain rice cakes (not coated)
- Yoghurt (non-dessert)
- Natural or low fat yogurt with fresh fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned in its own juice)
- Wholemeal or plain scones.
- Sugar-free jelly pots or fruit jelly.
- Pot of custard or rice pudding.
- Pasta or rice
- Cheese
- Hummus
- Olives

Drinks

- All pupils are encouraged to bring milk to school. Milk is a good drink option as it is tooth-friendly as well as nutritious. It is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium-rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage
- Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of tap/still water to school. If children do not drink enough water they become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
- Pure unsweetened juices or well-diluted sugar-free squashes (1 part squash to 8 parts water) may be included but only as part of children's main lunch meal.

Treat Day

- 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 not permitted in school

- Chewing gum
- Frubes
- chewy sticky bars
- fizzy drinks
- Fruit winders

Foods permitted for Friday Treat

- Chocolate products, cereal bars & sweets
- Coated rice cakes
- Fruit juices
- Biscuits
- Cakes, buns and pastries, pain au Chocolat
- Coated Rice Cakes
- Crisps
- Granola Bars

- Due to the possible incidence of severe allergic reactions to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils please:
 - Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
 - Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts, nut-based bread and cereal/health bars containing nuts or labelled “may contain nut traces” in school lunches.
 - Ask children not to share lunches.
 - If your child has eaten peanuts/nuts before coming to school, please be sure your child’s hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering the school.

Please note that the school may have to enforce a strict ban on nuts if necessary.

- On special occasions (decided by the school), non-food related treats are to be encouraged.
- Sweet treats for birthdays/ after a family holiday such as cakes, buns, party bags etc., **should not** be brought to school as in the school setting, there are so many birthdays that sweet treats could be available nearly every day and it is unfair to children who may have allergies.
- In keeping with the Green Schools Initiative, which addresses reducing litter and hence protecting the environment, foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly
- Under our “Health and Safety Policy” hot drinks and soup should be consumed from a sealed container.
- 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 they cannot open by themselves e.g. food with wrappers, unpeeled oranges and by ensuring all food is well prepared e.g. peeled/chopped fruit, sandwiches cut.
- Parents must ensure that lunchboxes contain whatever utensils are required.
- Unfinished lunches will be brought home. Children will be asked not to swap lunches or share food, utensils or drinks containers.
- Nutrition and healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.

Subject	Strand	Strand Unit	Teacher Guidelines
SPHE	Myself	Taking care of my body – Food and Nutrition Self-Identity – Making Decisions (J1 – 2 nd) Making Decisions (3 rd -6 th)	Pages 11-13
Science	Living Things	Myself – Human Processes	Pages 10-11

- Teachers and staff will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including providing non-food related awards.
- Healthy Eating Awareness days will be held periodically as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at home and at school.
- It is recognised that there are instances where the food provided varies due to the location or the nature of the occasion such as school trips. As far as possible it is hoped that food provided on such occasions will comply with the school’s Healthy Eating Policy.

Exceptions

At the discretion of the class teachers, the following exceptions may be made;

- End of term parties
- School trips (teachers will advise what foods may be brought on a trip)

- Teachers giving small treats for various reasons
- School Events

What if my child brings food/drinks not permitted to school?

Generally, children will be allowed to eat/drink what they have brought to school and will be encouraged not to bring them on other days. Repeated breaches of school policy will be brought to the attention of parents & guardians.

Foods and drinks e.g. chewing gum, fizzy drinks that are specifically banned and have been brought to school, the pupils will be asked to take these foods/drinks home and not eat/drink them in school.

Special Dietary / Medical Requirements

Parents of children with special dietary requirements are required to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss the implications of the policy.

Success Criteria

Teachers will be asked to observe how well the policy is being complied with regularly.

Implementation and Review

Roles and Responsibilities

This policy will be the responsibility of the staff, parents, guardians and children in the school and will be supported by the BOM.

Timeframe and Review

The Healthy Eating Policy will be reviewed every three years and the policy will be made available for parents and guardians on enrolment of their child into school. The revised policy will be readily available to parents and guardians on request.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management-Gerry Sheanon

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal-Eilís Keegan

Date: _____