

Scoil Naomh Molaise

Grange, Co. Sligo.

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we at Scoil Naomh Molaise encourage our 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. For example, 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.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

Our school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we will:

- Inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice;
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it, as necessary.

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a Healthy Eating Policy in 2017. The school participated in the *Food Dudes*, a programme encouraging children to try fruit and vegetables in 2018. This programme was very successful in engendering a positive attitude in the children to fruit and vegetables. This policy was reviewed in June 2022. All stakeholders in the process i.e. parents, pupils and staff were consulted and the revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 6th of July 2022.

Aims

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To promote a healthy eating and encourage a positive attitude to food.
- To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in the school.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

Objectives

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.

- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Content of the Policy

There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of living a healthy and balanced life.

The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level and is taught each year. These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as Science and Geography.

As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green schools status lunches should be packed in recyclable boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. All lunch waste and uneaten food is to be taken home. This also allows parents/guardians to see exactly what their child is able to eat during the school day.

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

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal
Rice – wholegrain
Pasta – wholegrain
Potato Salad
Wholemeal Scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Pitta bread

Savouries

Lean meat (chicken/turkey)
Eggs
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Cheese
Quiche
Hummus

Diary

Cheese (triangles/slices)
Natural yoghurt

Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach
Mandarins, Orange segments,
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,
Plum, Pineapple cubes
Grapes, Cucumber, Sweetcorn
Tomato, Pepper slices

Drinks

*Water
Milk
Yoghurt

*We encourage children to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day. Hydration is important for concentration.

Pupils should be encouraged to have a role in preparing their own lunches and meals in order to promote responsibility for their own health and nutrition.

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

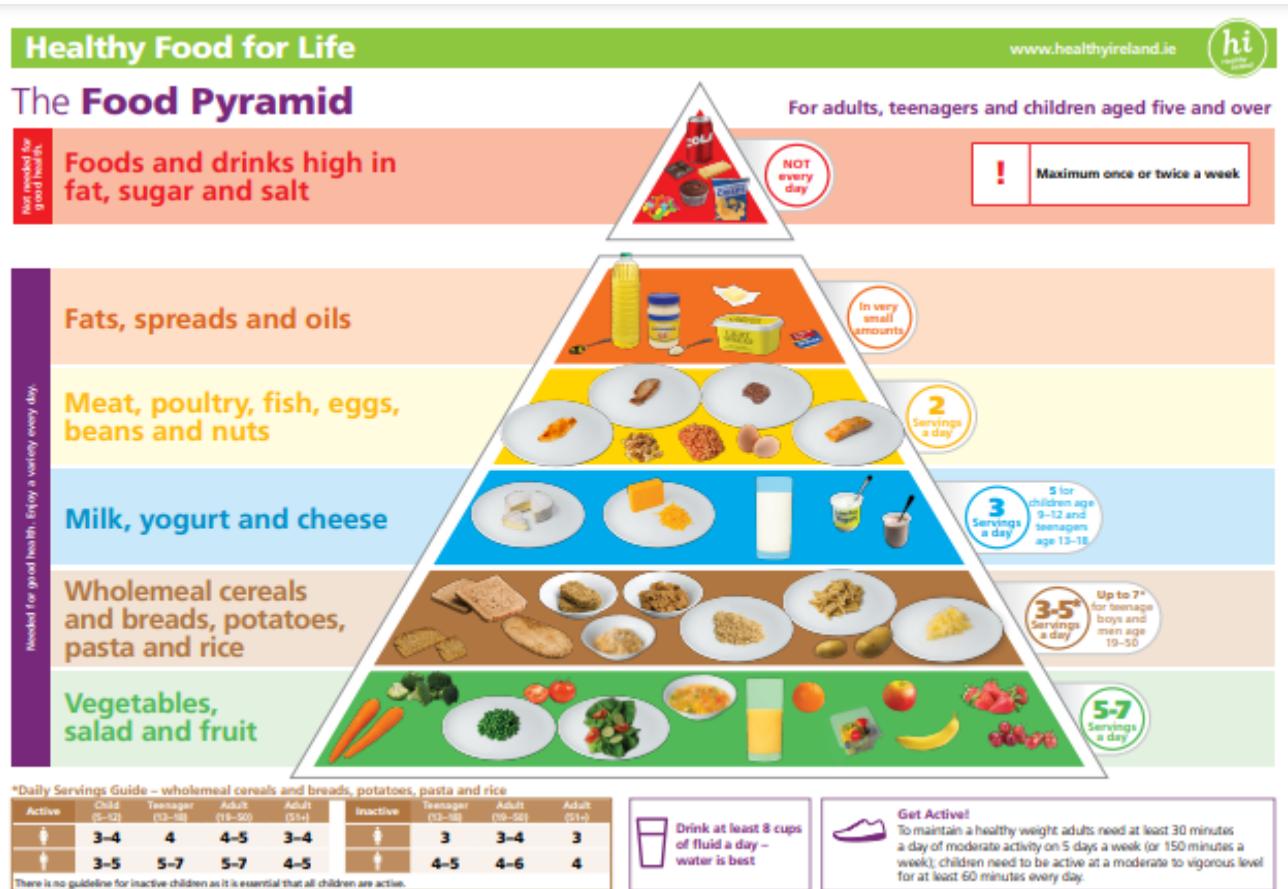
Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)

- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Buns or muffins
- Chocolate croissants
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn

The Food Pyramid (recommended daily intake)

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



Treat Day & Special Occasions

Friday will be our treat day. On this day, children can bring to school one small food item from the ‘not allowed’ list. Please note that sharing bags of sweets or crisps or large bars of chocolate are not allowed. If large treats are brought to school, children will be allowed to eat a little and asked to put the rest away for another time.

For special events and celebrations such as Green Flag days, end of term parties, Graduation celebrations etc., children may bring in a small treat or teachers may provide a treat for the class. Children will be reminded that this is an ‘occasional’ treat and not ‘every day food’.

Other considerations – Allergies

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible to the class teacher at the start of the school year about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be relayed to all relevant staff.

There is a total ban on nuts and nut products due to serious allergies of some pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children.
- Encourage healthy eating.
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs.
- To implement school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets etc. to school except on treat day.

Role of Children:

- To eat their lunch.
- To bring home any uneaten lunch and all lunch waste.
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy.
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets etc. to school except on treat days.

Role of School Staff:

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum.

Responsibility for review

A policy review will take place in June 2025 and will seek the views of the whole school community.

Communication and Ratification

This policy is shared with the school community via the school's website office@molaise.com

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 6th July 2022

Signed: *Fr Christy McHugh*
Chairperson

Signed: *Louise O'Connor*
Principal