



Healthy Eating for Wellbeing Policy St Patrick's BNS 2021



Why have a healthy eating policy for wellbeing?

The SPHE Primary School Curriculum Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

St. Patrick's BNS is committed to facilitating the development of pupils' skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and students as part of the school process to help integrate healthy eating into school life.

Recent research (Department of Health and Children) has highlighted disturbing trends, including an increase in childhood obesity and diabetes. Therefore, our policy and guidelines review are both timely and critical.

Reference documents

- A) (Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023)
- B) <http://www.healthofireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/>
- C) Healthy Lifestyle Circular 13/2016 supports the schools work in this area.....”
Regulating food intake is not the job of schools. However, schools are well placed to support pupils to develop an understanding of the nourishment of common and easily accessible food products and facilitate the development of the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their food intake.”

How the policy was developed

This policy was developed in collaboration between teachers, pupils and parents. Together with a pupil survey, teachers, student council and parents were consulted and invited to comment and shape the policy.

The survey showed that many pupils felt they did not have adequate time to properly eat their food, some noticed that pupils were bringing ‘banned’ foods for lunch, younger classes were bringing juices rather than milk or water and a lot of yoghurt was being consumed.

The Team

- 1 Members of Student Council
- 2 A committee of six teachers



Aims and objectives of our Healthy Eating Policy

We wish 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 promote a whole school approach to healthy eating and nutrition**
- **To understand that a healthy well-balanced diet -**
 - **ensures the development of healthy hair, skin, teeth, muscles and strong bones**
 - **provides energy and aids concentration**
 - **strengthens the immune system**
- **To develop an awareness that good eating habits formed in early childhood influence health and wellbeing throughout our lives**
- **To develop awareness of the importance of food for growth and development**
- **To explore food preferences in a balanced diet**
- **To learn about different foods and to make informed choices**
- **To implement healthy behaviour and participation in activities that promote and sustain health. This includes physical activity**

Parents Role:

The home plays the primary role in determining healthy eating habits. A Healthy Eating Policy developed in consultation with the whole-school community which includes Teachers, Parents, Students, and the Student Council as part of the school planning process will help to integrate healthy eating into school life.

- **Breakfast: A nourishing breakfast is the best start to your child’s day giving him/her the energy needed to concentrate and learn. Research has shown that pupil’s benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating breakfast**

- **Lunch: We encourage reusable water bottles, lunch boxes and minimum use of wrapping**
 - **Ideally, pupils' lunches should be varied and might include:**
 - **Two portions from the bread/cereal group**
 - **One portion of meat or meat alternative**
 - **At least one portion from the fruit and vegetable group**
 - **One portion from the dairy product group.**

Children's Role

Children are encouraged to participate in making their own healthy school lunch and take responsibility for their food choices

Teachers' Role:

- **To promote nutritional awareness**
- **To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children**
- **To provide parents and those involved in school activities with clear information**

New environment for Healthy Eating for Wellbeing:

Small Break: Pupils will have adequate time to eat before going to the yard. Food at this break should be easy to eat. Ideally a small sandwich or piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

Pupils have an exercise break for 10 mins.

Lunch Break: Children have at least 10 minutes to eat at this break; and additional eating time provided before or after break if required. Ideally, children's lunches should be varied and might include:

- **Two portions from the bread/cereal group**
- **One portion of meat or meat alternative**
- **At least one portion from the fruit and vegetable group**
- **One portion from the dairy product**
- **Water, milk – freely available in school. All classrooms have drinkable water and all classes receive free milk (and fruit) from Dublin City Council.**

For further ideas and suggestions for healthy lunch box ideas, please see WWW.SAFEFOOD.IE / “Safe Food – Healthy Lunch Box” brochure.

Optional Special Treats

On specific days during the school year the children may be permitted special treats:

- End of term parties
- School Trips
- Optional small (snack size) Friday treat – not for sharing

Strictly not permitted in school:

Due to high sugar content, allergies and dental health

Nuts (including nut butters, chocolate spreads and pesto containing nuts)	Fizzy drinks, sports drinks, juices and smoothies
Chewing gum	Crisps & popcorn
Fruit winders	Cereal Bars

Communication and Implementation

Curriculum

Healthy eating for wellbeing is included in the following curriculum areas:

- SPHE Primary School Curriculum Strand Units “Taking Care of my Body / Food and Nutrition “and “Making Choices”
- Science Primary School Curriculum Unit “Living Things / Myself / Human Life Processes”
- P.E. Curriculum

Reference will be made to Healthy Eating Policy in pupils’ printed homework journals.

In addition:

All classes will receive at least 1 lesson on healthy eating each term.

School staff will provide supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.

We will also hold a Healthy Eating Awareness week annually.

- Parents will be reminded that they are responsible for providing a healthy school lunch for their children

- Parents will be supported in their role as Primary Educators by providing them with up-to-date information on healthy eating habits from the Dept. of Health
- Pupils will be encouraged to participate in making their own healthy school lunch
- Teachers will explicitly teach about healthy eating as part of the SPHE curriculum

Substitute Teachers and new staff will be made aware of the contents of this policy.

Key Measures

- 1 Healthy eating covered as outlined in the SPHE curriculum outcomes.
- 2 Staff attending professional updating/training.
- 3 Staff will provide non-food rewards during school. (see alternatives in appendix 1)
- 4 External agencies such as HSE, Sports bodies, Bord Bia will be invited to support this policy in line with the guidelines in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0042/2018.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to the whole school community through

- Publication on the school website <https://saintpats.ie/>
- Intake meetings

A variety of the following communication channels may be used for reminders / notifications

- Aladdin (teachers and parents messaging system)
- Parent / Teacher meetings
- Class newsletters
- Healthy Eating Week
- Twitter
- New staff and substitute teacher information packages

In addition, all after school clubs will be encouraged to adhere to this policy.

Implementation

The Student Council agreed to this policy in May 2021. It was also shared with the Parent association and it was subsequently ratified by the Board of Management in October 2021.

Hard copies and up to date information will be available in every classroom, along with the Non-Food Healthy Awards List.

Actions to take if the policy is not supported

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school, they will be asked to put it away until after school. If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher will communicate with parents and / or organise a meeting with their parents / guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

Review and Evaluation

St. Patrick's will review our Healthy Eating Policy every two years or earlier if required. Surveys of pupils will assist in evaluating this policy as will the Policy Review Checklist included in the HSE Healthy Eating Policy Toolkit (PAGE 20)

Signed:



Prof. Anne. Looney (Chairperson)



Ms. Natasha Bassett (Principal)

Date: 22 nd October 2021

Appendix 1: Ideas for school lunches

Here are some ideas to help you prepare and pack a healthy nutritious school lunch.

DAY	DRINK	FRUIT	SANDWICH	TODAY'S TIPS
MONDAY				Try different breads such as pitta, bagels, granary and muffins
TUESDAY				Milk is the best drink for healthy bones
WEDNESDAY				Try a salad box with rice or pasta for a change
THURSDAY				Avoid fizzy and sugary drinks, they are bad for your teeth
FRIDAY				Yoghurts are a tasty snack and good for you too!

Drinks: Think before you drink! Milk and water are best or sugar free squash (one part squash to four parts water)

Fillings: Salads (eg. cucumber, tomato, apple) and relish can be added to give flavour.

Remember:

Convenience snacks are high in salt and additives and should not be eaten on a regular basis.

Encourage your child to make their own lunch. They will be more inclined to eat it if they had a part in making it!



MONDAY		Lean ham, beef, pork lamb		Try to include some salad every day
TUESDAY		Cooked chicken or turkey		Carrot could be grated in a sandwich or chopped in sticks to eat on its own
WEDNESDAY		Tinned tuna or salmon		Sweetcorn goes great with tuna. Try it!
THURSDAY		Egg - hard boiled, sliced or mashed		Use spring onion, light mayonnaise or relish to add flavour
FRIDAY		Cheese - slices, cubes or cheese spreads		Cucumber can be added to the sandwich or eaten on its own

Baps and Breads

Wholemeal and wholegrain bread is best as it is higher in fibre than white. Try rolls, baps, wraps, crispbreads, burger buns, crackers, scones. Tip! Cut sandwiches in fingers, triangles or squares for a change.

Feeling Fruity?

Include fruit every day for lunch and break time.

Try banana, grapes, orange segments, plum, pear, apple slices, kiwi (cut in half and eaten with a spoon). Tip: Squeeze lemon juice over sliced apple, pear or banana to prevent from going brown.

Dairy Delights

Include something from the milk group at every lunch.

Milk to drink, yogurt as a snack, cheese in a sandwich.

Tip! For variety try cheese slices, cubes, triangles or grated cheese.



HEALTHY REWARDS

Using food as a reward:

- Rewarding good behaviour with food contradicts the messages given as part of the curriculum.
- Food rewards can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety clues and encourages them to eat when they are not hungry.
- It encourages eating outside of normal meal times and can contribute to tooth decay.

Alternatives to food rewards

- Asking children to come up with alternatives to food rewards will give you lots of ideas.
- Social rewards which involve attention, praise or thanks are often more highly valued than food.

RECOGNITION	
Certificate or sticker acknowledging a 'great job'	Photo recognition board in a prominent place in the school
Recognise achievement on the noticeboard, website or through school announcements.	Phone call or note to parents
PRIVILEGES	
Choosing a class activity.	Teaching the class.
Helping a teacher/member of staff.	Making deliveries to the office.
Extra playtime.	Designing a class bulletin board.
Homework pass.	Reading school announcements.
Show and tell time.	Sitting on special chair or beanbag.
REWARDS FOR THE CLASS	
Golden time.	A book read aloud to the class.
Listening to music during lunch.	Playing a game or doing puzzles together.
Dancing or physical activity time.	Eating lunch or class time outdoors.
STATIONARY, SPORTS GEAR, TOYS	
Frisbees	Skipping ropes
Stickers	Marbles
Step counters	Pencils
Stencils/stamps	Colouring books
<i>Ideas from other teachers . . .</i>	
<p>'I have the children earn letters to spell 'Game Day'. After the letters have been earned we play board games or have extra PE time. The children beg for 'Game Day'.</p>	
<p>'I give my children 30 minutes at the beginning of the week and they can earn or lose free time according to their behaviour. I use a timer and add time when their behaviour is good. Adding time is very effective'</p>	