

Healthy Eating Policy

Please read this policy in conjunction with the school's Anaphylaxis Policy.

St. Paul's N.S.

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at St. Paul's National School we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. This healthy eating policy promotes healthy eating habits in our school.

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 improves concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

From April 2024 our school has been operating the Hot Meals scheme. This policy still applies to all food brought in for small break and by children bringing in their own lunch.

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. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage).

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.

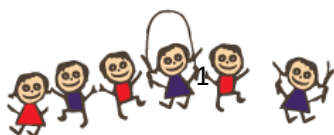
The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal
Rice
Rice Cakes - not chocolate covered
Pasta
Potato Salad
Scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Pitta bread
Wraps
Bagels
Couscous

Savouries

Lean Meat
Chicken/Turkey
Quiche
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Cheese
Hard Boiled Eggs



Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach
Mandarins, Orange segments
Fruit Salad, dried fruit
Plum, Pineapple cubes, Melon
Grapes
Cucumber, Carrot sticks, Sweetcorn
Tomato
Coleslaw
Salad

Drinks

Water
Milk
Squashes, i.e. (dilutable low sugar)

A word about Milk and Yoghurt

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese or yoghurt. 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/her to have a carton of yoghurt 'see below' or a small helping of cheese.

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

- Pastries e.g. croissants/jambons
- Sweet bread e.g. Brioche
- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Popcorn
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Buns and cakes
- Fruit Juices (eg) Capri Sun, Fruit Shoots
- Flavoured milk
- Dessert yoghurts including yoghurts with chocolate & biscuit pieces
- Sweets
- Desserts
- All biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders

Remember: **Anything over 5g of sugar per 100g** is considered high in sugar. An easy way to remember this is that the word sugar has 5 letters!

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

See this link: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/food-pyramid-images/food-pyramid-simple-version.pdf>

Treat Days

School Tour/Special Occasions/ End of Term Day will be our treat days.

Pupils should bring treats for themselves only and should have a sandwich to eat first before any treats. Smoothies or fruit skewers could be used on treat days.

Green Flag School

The Green School initiative promotes the 3 R's

- **Reduce**
- **Re use**
- **Recycle**

With this in mind, children are also asked to

- have a school lunch box/bag
- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, tin foil, and sandwich bags
- 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 and consideration will be given.

This policy was circulated to the parents for consideration and feedback. It will be reviewed on a regular basis.

This policy will be implemented in May 2024.

This policy will be reviewed in May 2026.

This policy was ratified at the Board of Management meeting of _____

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal