

Scoil Naomh Cárthach

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HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Ballyfinane N.S. is participating in the “Health Promoting Schools” project. As part of this, we are all very conscious of the importance of our children’s diet and how it impacts on their health, development & well-being. Children spend a significant part of the day in school and therefore it is very important that they eat healthy nutritious lunches. This is much easier to encourage when every child is eating the same kinds of food. To encourage this, the staff and parents have worked together to draw up a policy. The successful implementation of this policy is an important step in promoting a healthy lifestyle for our children. All families and pupils are asked to co-operate with its implementation. This policy will be reviewed at the end of the year 2024.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy:

- To promote a whole school approach to healthy eating and nutrition.
- To understand the benefits of a healthy well balanced diet
- To develop an awareness of good eating habits and practice around food
- To develop an awareness of the importance of food for growth and development
- To explore food choices in a balanced diet
- To develop well balanced practice around eating habits and nutrition that will serve children well as they go through school lending to life learning skills

Objectives of Healthy Eating Policy:

- 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.

Healthy Lunch Choices

- Bread and rolls, especially whole wheat, Sandwiches
- Pitta bread, naan bread, wraps, bagels and crackers
- Oat cakes, rice cakes and crackers
- Fillings- cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, egg, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, salad and banana
- Pasta, rice and dessert rice
- Cheese and yoghurt
- Nutritious cereals and muesli
- Meat
- Peeled carrot, celery, salads, tomatoes, peppers, celery, broccoli, cucumber and cabbage
- Bananas, oranges, apples, kiwi, nectarines, pears, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, pineapple etc.
- Drinks- milk, water, fruit juice, yoghurt drinks, soup, smoothies

The items listed underneath should not be included in school lunches:

- Chocolate, bars including chocolate spread
- Biscuits, cakes and ‘cereal’ bars

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- Crisps and Pringles
 - Fizzy drinks, juice drinks (as opposed to pure fruit juice which is allowed), flavoured milk
 - Nuts (due to concerns about choking and allergy)
 - Chewing gum
 - Sweets & lollipops

If a pupil brings in any of the above, it will be sent home in the lunchbox (with the exception of Friday – see permitted treats)

FRIDAY IS ‘TREAT DAY’

We all enjoy a treat from time to time. To encourage children to abide by this healthy lunch policy, Friday is designated ‘Special Treat Day’. Children can bring a treat which may only include **one** of the following on this day in addition to their healthy nutritious lunch.

- small chocolate bar
- a biscuit
- small cake
- cereal bar

Events may take place during the year which may, also, be considered as “treat days;” for example; Pancake Tuesday, end of year parties, etc. These events take place at the discretion of the Principal and moderation is encouraged. When baking is done, all foods will be sent home and not consumed at school, so that parents can use their own discretion.

Children with special dietary requirements

Children with special dietary requirements and / or allergies will at all times be facilitated to choose foods to suit their own individual requirements. Parents should discuss this with the class teacher to avoid misunderstanding.

Birthday Party Treats

In keeping with this policy, teachers are unable to distribute treats from home for birthdays regardless of the day of the week as we need to consider the needs of pupils with allergies and particular dietary requirements.

Survey

Both parents and children completed a survey on Healthy Eating prior to the policy review

Results from parent’s surveyed

- Parents wished for their children to be aware of the policy,
- a repeat of the cooking demo on healthy eating,
- Education around healthy foods for both parents and kids.

Results from the children’s survey reported that

- children had a very good understanding of healthy lunches
- children reported they enjoyed Friday treat day, the social aspect of lunch time and they liked their lunches
- one or two respondents requested more time to eat their lunch

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Conclusion

Overall the parent's questionnaire and children's survey proved to be beneficial in informing the school of Healthy Eating Practices at Ballyfinane NS. The school will use these findings going forward to respond to matters raised. Ballyfinane NS will use Active Week and Friendship and Wellbeing Week to incorporate and promote healthy eating activities. SPHE lessons will explore the Food Pyramid. The school will partake in the **Food Dudes** initiative to offer children a sampling of a variety of healthy fruit and vegetable snacks.

Roles and Responsibilities in implementing our policy:

- Parents are responsible for providing a healthy lunch for their child / children
- Children are encouraged to in making their own healthy school lunch
- Teachers will teach about healthy eating through the SPHE curriculum
- Ballyfinane NS will review Healthy Eating Policy after two years.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____