

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in consultation with teachers, pupils and parents in 2005. The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in September 2012 and reviewed and ratified again in October 2018.

Rationale

This policy was formulated to encourage the children to incorporate healthy eating into their lifestyle.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

This policy is in keeping with the school ethos by promoting a lifelong education of healthy eating for mind and body.

Aims

We hope to:

- heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet
- encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition
- to raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.

Guidelines

School Lunch Scheme

Letterfrack NS is currently involved in the school lunch scheme. This scheme is run as all-inclusive but parents have the option to opt out of the scheme and provide their child(ren) with lunch each day. Our school lunch provider is Fresh Today.

The School Meals (Local Projects) Scheme is an administrative scheme, operated directly by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Scheme provides funding to primary and post-primary schools, local groups, voluntary organisations and community-based not-for-profit preschools operating their own school meals projects. The School Meals Programme operates in schools and other locations with priority access for schools designated as DEIS and aims to provide regular, nutritious food to children who are unable, by reason of lack of good quality food, to take full advantage of the education provided for them.

The implementation of the Nutrition Standards for School Meals in January 2018 will ensure that children and young people are offered healthy, nutritious and balanced meals and snacks. These Standards aim to ensure that children and young people in schools participating in the scheme are provided with healthy balanced meals that follow the Healthy Eating Guidelines.

These Nutrition Standards have been created for those involved in providing food to schools or organisations in receipt of funding from the School Meals (Local Projects) Scheme. The Standards will also be used by those administering the Scheme in the schools, to ensure that food purchased complies with the Nutrition Standards.

The scheme provides €1.40 funding for each child's lunch. FOUR items should be provided. Proposed nutrition standard: Using the Food Pyramid as a guide, every lunch should contain 2 servings of vegetables, salad or fruit, 1 serving of wholegrain bread 1 serving of meat, poultry, egg or cheese filling.

ALLERGIES – WE ARE A NUT FREE ZONE

NB – It is VITAL that you take into consideration that we have children with Severe Nut & Sesame Seed Allergies and therefore lunches may not contain nuts or sesame seeds ie nutella, peanut butter and any breads/fillings containing sesame seeds or nuts or traces of same.

Current Good Practices

- Lunches are eaten indoors before going out to play. This habit encourages the children to focus on eating their food and enjoying it. An added advantage is the fact that litter problems are managed within the classroom.
- We promote healthy eating through
 - the SPHE programme
 - information leaflets from An Bord Bia etc.

Proposed Action Plan

It is proposed to encourage children to eat healthy lunches and discourage unhealthy food and drinks.

Exceptions:

Children may

- have treats on special occasions such as end of term parties.
- on school trips.
- Home-made treats on Friday only

Example of healthy lunches

- Sandwiches (preferable wholemeal bread)
- Crackers
- Pasta salads
- Fruit
- Yogurt (fruit or natural)
- Cheese
- Raisins
- Dried fruit
- Vegetables (carrot sticks; cucumber etc.,)
- Milk
- Water
- **NO CEREAL BARS**
- **NO JUICE**

What if children bring discouraged food to school?

If children bring unhealthy food to school they will not be allowed to eat it and they will be asked to take it home. If there is no alternative healthy food in their lunch box then they may phone their parents to request a healthy lunch. If the parent is not contactable an effort will be made by the school to provide a healthy snack.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school their parents/guardians will be contacted to discuss the problem.

Implementation

This policy comes into effect immediately.