



Scoil an Athar Tadhg

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

We, at Scoil an Athar Tadhg, are proud to present our Healthy Eating Policy. Having consulted with pupils, parents and staff and having completed a comprehensive survey, we have formulated a policy that reflects our views, aims and plans to promote healthy eating in our school. This Healthy Eating plan was prepared during the academic year 2006-2007 and was revised by Staff in 2010. It was reviewed in 2013-14 and also in 2021-2022. It was presented to the Parents Association, Student Council (3/6/22) and the Board of Management for input and was amended to reflect the views of those agencies.

Rationale

“Schools are an ideal setting to promote good nutrition as they have been shown to have a positive impact on eating behaviours of young people”, (World Health Organisation 1998).

Good nutrition is critical for every child's short and long term health and development. Healthy eating habits are learned during childhood and can help reduce the risk of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, anaemia and bad dental health throughout their life. At Scoil an Athar Tadhg, we believe a healthy eating policy is fundamental, not only to add life to years but also to add years to life. Our policy outlines our school's commitment to promote healthy eating. It promotes the importance of good nutrition practices. This policy aims to support parents/carers and pupils around developing healthy eating habits at an early age.

Aims

To promote nutritional awareness and provide consistent messages about nutrition through classroom education.

To provide members of the school community, staff, parents/carers and pupils with clear information on healthy eating.

To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which we hope will become lifelong.

To promote the health and safety of children with serious food allergies.

To support the school's environmental policy e.g. re-usable containers and minimising wrappers, sourcing food locally etc.

To help improve children's concentration, learning and energy levels.

To support parents/carers and children in making healthy and enjoyable decisions around food by providing nutritional information as well as information around hand hygiene

Curriculum Integration:

S.P.H.E: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition

Science: Myself: Human Life Processes

P.E: Promoting a healthy, active lifestyle

Guidelines

Breakfast: Breakfast is an important start to the day. We encourage our children to eat a healthy breakfast before they come to school. Eating a breakfast improves concentration, which is so important at school.

Lunches: Food and nutrition are important for growth and development. Good nutrition is essential for school children. We encourage our children to bring healthy nutritious lunches to school/ lunches should contain foods from each of the bottom four groups of the Food Pyramid.

Healthy Food for Life www.healthyireland.ie 

The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

NOT every day Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.

5-DAY LUNCHBOX PLANNER
We offer you an idea of putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchboxes contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following plan shows you the potential variety you can have.

Day	Food Group 1 (Vegetables, salad and fruit)	Food Group 2 (Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice)	Food Group 3 (Milk, yogurt and cheese)	Food Group 4 (Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts)	Food Group 5 (Fats, spreads and oils)
MONDAY	1 banana + Handful of carrot sticks + Hot of low fat yogurt				
TUESDAY	Small pitta bread with tuna and lettuce + In wholemeal sauce + Banana + Carton of drink				
WEDNESDAY	2 tablespoons of rice (cold) with 100g of chicken and lettuce + 2 crackers with low fat cheddar cheese + Carton of unsweetened fruit juice				
THURSDAY	1 slice of bread with cooked ham and lettuce + Small container of fruit in its own juice + Yogurt				
FRIDAY	1 bottle wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce + Small tub of stewed fruit + Small slice of fruit cake + Milk				

1 **2** **3** **3-5** **5-7** Servings a day

Use as little as possible. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils. Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling or stir-frying.

Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.

Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.

Wholemeal and wholegrain cereals are best. Enjoy at each meal. The number of servings depends on age, size, if you are a man or a woman and on activity levels. Watch your serving size and use the Daily Servings Guide below.*

Base your meals on these and enjoy a variety of colours. More is better. Limit fruit juice to unsweetened, once a day.

Not needed for good health. **Needed for good health. Enjoy a variety every day.**

*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice **Serving size guide**

- Children eat their lunches in the classroom.
- Food is not allowed in the school yard.
- Children take home the contents of their lunch box.
- Children are allowed sip water during class time. **However, bottles will be kept off school desks.**
- Fruit Boost: We piloted this idea in September 2007. The children were allowed to eat a piece of fruit or vegetable at a specified time each day in class. In some classes a point system is used.

Children are not allowed to bring the following to school:

- Chewing gum
- Fizzy drinks
- Lollipops
- Chewy or sticky bars

NB: There is a total ban on all nuts and nut-based products (including peanut butter, chocolate spread, any cereal bars with nuts, drinks containing nut products e.g. almond milk) because of the serious

allergies of some pupils in the school. (If your child has a suspected nut-based product for their lunch, they will be asked to take this home.

We do not encourage children to bring foods from the top level of the pyramid for their lunch. However, Friday is treat day and children are allowed bring *one treat* on that day e.g. crisps, chocolate bar etc.

5-DAY LUNCHBOX PLANNER

We often end up putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchbox contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following planner shows you the potential variety you can have.

MONDAY				
1 medium bread roll with chicken and lettuce	+		+	Handful of carrot sticks
			+	Pot of low fat yoghurt
				
TUESDAY				
Small pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn	+		+	1/2 wholemeal scone
			+	
				Carton of milk
WEDNESDAY				
2 tablespoons of cous-cous with 1 tablespoon of dried fruit	+		+	2 crackers with low fat cheddar cheese
			+	
				Carton of unsweetened fruit juice
THURSDAY				
2 slices of bread with cooked ham and lettuce	+	Small container of fruit in its own juice	+	
			+	Yoghurt
				
FRIDAY				
Tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce	+		+	Small tub of stewed fruit
			+	Small slice of fruit cake
				

Notes:
 1. Lunchbox planner includes snack and lunch items
 2. Smaller portions for smaller people
 3. Use low fat spread, low fat mayonnaise or relish instead of full fat options

www.safefood.eu
HELPLINE
 NI 0800 085 1683
 ROI 1850 40 4567

Healthy Eating Initiatives:

- Healthy foods will be promoted at all times by:
- Teacher's encouragement and example
- Discussion of the Food Pyramid and the importance of the different foods on the shelves.
- Healthy Eating Theme Day e.g. fresh fruit day. This will be coordinated with Sports Day.
- Teacher observation of lunches – recognition given to children eating healthy lunches.
- Discussion on the positive effects of healthy eating – good health, strong teeth, greater fitness etc.
- Visits by nutritionists, dental nurse, physical instructors etc.
- Display of slogans, posters and art work encouraging Healthy Eating.
- Healthy Eating linked with SPHE and other subjects.
- Encouragement from the Student Council.
- Children's projects on healthy eating.
- Slogans e.g.

BREAKFAST IS AN IMPORTANT START TO THE DAY
FRUIT – THE TASTY WAY TO GET THROUGH THE DAY

EAT WISELY- KEEP TEETH HEALTHY AND STRONG
GOOD EATING HABITS CAN PROTECT AGAINST ILLNESS IN THE FUTURE

Sugar Intake:

Children are encouraged to limit the frequency of sugar intake. Sugar lowers the acidity in the mouth and this allows bacteria to attack the teeth.

Calcium:

We encourage our children to be aware of the importance of calcium. Children's bones are growing and calcium is needed to strengthen these growing bones. Milk, cheese, and yogurt (third level of pyramid) provide us with the calcium we need.

Food Hygiene:

- Personal Hygiene: children should be aware of the importance of hand washing and always ensuring hands are clean before eating their lunches.
- Wash fruit before eating it.
- Clean eating surface.
- Check best before/ use by dates.
- Food Storage: children should have appropriate containers for their lunches. Boxes and bottles should be washed every day after school.
- Food Preparation: We encourage our children to be aware of the importance of cleanliness when preparing food.

Waste Disposal:

We encourage our children to recycle all paper and cardboard. Children take home the contents of their lunch box each day and are encouraged to compost the organic matter e.g. fruit peelings.

Exceptions:

The following exceptions are permitted:

- End of term parties
- Birthdays
- School trips
- Treat from teacher

Resources

The following websites provide useful information and tips on healthy lunches:

- www.safefood.eu
- www.healthpromotion.ie/health/healthy_eating
- www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/

Success Criteria

We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy by observing the contents of the children's lunch boxes.

Roles and Responsibilities

The principal will co-ordinate the progress of the policy, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation and report back to staff, parents and pupils.

Timeframe for Implementation

The policy has been implemented since 2007.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil an Athar Tadhg at its meeting on May 11, 2011. It was reviewed in March 2014 and June 2022. Parents may view this policy on the school website.

Following consultation with all staff members, the Board of Management adopted this policy at its meeting on and shall be reviewed by the Board of Management and changed where deemed necessary and appropriate.

Signed: *Oliver Manley* Date: 14/06/22
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Cormac Duggan* Date: 14/06/22
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

The Original, signed copy of this policy is available in the School Office.
This policy will be communicated to parents via the Parents Association and to the Board of Management.