

Healthy Eating Policy

Réalt na Mara GNS

Rationale:

Réalt na Mara GNS is dedicated to creating and providing an environment that promotes healthy eating habits among pupils, their families and school staff. This healthy eating policy has been established to encourage individuals to consistently make informed choices about all food- not just what is in the lunchbox. We hope that this policy will assist the adherence of individuals to a nutritionally balanced diet and active lifestyle.

Aims:

By establishing a Whole School Food Policy, we hope to;

1. Promote healthy eating and living in ways that are consistent with the latest national healthy eating guidelines and school curricula.
2. Enable pupils to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.
3. Promote the personal development and well-being of the child.

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

Food:

- Parents/ Guardians are encouraged to ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school.
- All children should bring a healthy packed lunch to school that includes helpings of foods from the following food groups- fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates, dairy and protein.
- Children are encouraged to bring lean meat options such as chicken, turkey, or fish such as tuna and salmon to school.
- Jam, marmalade and honey have high sugar content and should not be offered frequently as a sandwich filling. No nut based spreads such as peanut butter, almond butter, Nutella or chocolate spread are allowed.
- Some of the healthy snacks that the school recommends include fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (not dessert), rice cakes and crackers.
- Cutting up fruit and vegetables into smaller pieces will make it easier for young children to eat.

- Yoghurts in tubes (such as Frubes) are not ideal for younger children's lunchboxes as these can be difficult for them to open independently.
- Chocolate/ chewy/ sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, crisps, cakes, and cereal bars are not permitted.

Drinks:

- All pupils are encouraged to bring water to school. Children will be allowed to refill their bottles with tap water at lunchtime if necessary.
- Milk is also a good drink option for children.
- Pure unsweetened juices or well diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash, 8 parts water) may be included as part of children's main lunch meal.
- Fruit juices and fizzy drinks are not permitted.

Lunchtime

- Children will have adequate time to eat their lunch before going out to yard
- Lunch for children will be eaten in their classrooms. No food to be taken outside.

Allergies

Due to the incidence of severe allergic reaction to peanuts and mixed nuts among pupils, we ask pupils, parents and teachers to be vigilant in the following;

- Avoid peanuts or any type of nut in school lunches
- Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts, nut-based breads and cereal/ cereal bars containing nuts or labelled 'may contain nut traces' in school lunches. No Manhattan popcorn allowed.
- Children should not share or swap lunches.
- If in contact with nuts before coming to school, please ensure hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering the school vicinity.
- If a child suffers with another particular food allergy their class teacher will be made aware of this at the start of the school year at the staff meeting.
- Please inform the office if your child has a food allergy and sign the consent form for treats either in the homework diary and/or from the teacher.

Rewards

- Teachers will endeavour to provide non food-based rewards in their classrooms for good behaviour or academic/ sporting achievements.
- No lollipops will be given out to the children by teachers.

Special Occasions

- On special occasions such as Halloween, Christmas, Easter or last day of term, non-food related treats will be encouraged by teachers. On these days the children may bring one small treat to school as part of their lunch. These treats must not contain nuts.
- For school tours, children should continue bring a healthy packed lunch that complies with the school's healthy eating policy. However, they may bring one small treat as part of their lunch. These treats must not contain nuts.
- Sweet treats for birthdays such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc should not be brought into school.

Curriculum and Learning Objectives

- Children will receive tuition on healthy living in subjects such as SPHE, PE and Science.
- Children will achieve learning outcomes as set out in the curricular areas of SPHE, PE and Science.
- Staff will engage in continued professional development in the area of Healthy Living.

Policy and Planning Objectives

- SPHE/ Healthy eating initiatives taught at similar times across class groups.
- 'Healthy Eating Awareness Day/Week will be held each year as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
- This policy will be reviewed as needed

Partnerships Objectives

- Parents Association will be mindful of this policy when organising fundraising events for the school.
- Policy will be published on the school website for all to access.
- External PE coaches to school will promote healthy active lifestyles.
- Before/ after school activities will promote healthy active lifestyles.

Green Schools/Waste-Free Lunch

- In keeping with our Green Schools Code, children are asked to be mindful of the environment when making their lunches.
- The use of reusable bottles and containers is actively encouraged.
- Parents are requested to avoid using clingfilm and tinfoil when wrapping lunches.
- Any uneaten food or waste should be brought home in the lunch-box/container and disposed of using the different recycling processes.
- Parents are requested to be mindful of reducing food waste by controlling appropriate portion sizes.
- Children should aim for a Waste Free Lunch box.
- Initiatives like a Waste Free Lunch Day may be held to promote this cause once per year or as needed.

Key Measures

- Healthy eating is covered every year as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- Teachers will occasionally monitor lunches and praise pupils who present with a healthy lunch.
- Staff will continue to attend CPD in this area.
- Teachers will use non-food based classroom rewards
- Parents/ Guardians are encouraged to be mindful of this healthy eating policy when purchasing or preparing lunches for their children.
- Children in senior classes ought to become more capable of choosing healthy foods and preparing their own healthy lunches as they progress through the school.

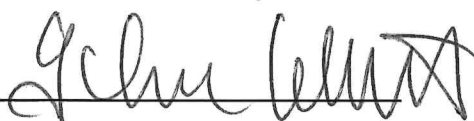
Communication

- This policy will be ratified by the Board of Management.
- This policy will be communicated to the whole school staff in paper format and will also be made available online for parents/guardians.
- A copy of this policy will be placed in every class teacher's policy folder.
- New parents and pupils to the school will be made aware of this policy at the enrolment meeting.
- New staff will be encouraged to read the policy when they start in school.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented by the whole school from November 2021 and reviewed as necessary.

Signed:



(Chairperson Board of Management)

Date:

3/2/2022