



# Scoil Mhuire, Kilvemnon

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## Healthy Eating Policy – May 2022

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we at Scoil Mhuire National School encourage our children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance. For example; a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective we will:

- Inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice;
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it, as

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, The school participated in *Food Dudes*, a programme encouraging children to try fruit and vegetables, in 2020. This programme was very successful in engendering a positive attitude in the children to fruit and vegetables.

### 1. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

Scoil Mhuire National School seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. Developing a healthy attitude to food and helping children to develop good habits is seen as an important part of school life.

#### 1. Aims

- To encourage a positive attitude to food
  - To promote a healthy diet
  - To educate about different foods
  - To promote good eating habits
  - To encourage children to have a healthy diet
  - To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school
  - To have a healthy school community
1. To enable each child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
  2. To enable each child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced

#### 1. Curriculum/Education

- There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of living a healthy
- The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level and is taught each year. These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as Science.

- As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green schools status lunches should be packed in recyclable boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. All litter and uneaten food is to be taken home.

The following guide is designed to help parents provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for our children:

| Bread & Alternatives                                                                                                                                                                                              | Savouries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bread or rolls (preferably whole-meal, whole-grain or whole-wheat varieties)<br>Wraps Pitta bread<br>Bread sticks<br>Rice – wholegrain Pasta – wholegrain<br>Wholemeal Scones/ Crackers.                          | Lean Meat (e.g. chicken/turkey, ham)<br>Eggs<br>Tinned Fish eg tuna/sardines/salmon<br>Potato Salad<br>Hummus<br><b>Drinks</b><br>Water or Milk are the ideal choice Fruit juices - <i>without added sugar. Pure fruit juice also contains natural sugar and should be diluted with water</i><br>Yoghurt<br><b>Dairy</b><br>Milk<br>Natural Yoghurt<br>Cheese (triangles/slices/ small blocks of cheddar/gouda/edam etc) |
| <b>Fruit &amp; Vegetables</b><br>Apples, Banana, Peach Mandarins, Plums<br>Orange segments<br>Fruit Salad, dried fruit<br>Pineapple cubes Grapes<br>Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Tomato<br>Pepper slices<br>Carrot batons |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Pupils should be encouraged to have a role in preparing their own lunches and meals in order to promote responsibility or their own health and nutrition.

#### **Water**

We encourage children to bring in a water bottle (that can be recycled) so they can have access to water throughout the day. Hydration is important for concentration.

#### ***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:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)
- Sweets or bars
- Cereal bars (high sugar content)
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders

*Useful Links with Ideas for Healthy Lunches: (these URLs may be subject to change)*

<http://www.safefood.eu/SafeFood/media/SafeFoodLibrary/Documents/Education/2012-SafeFood-Healthy-Lunchboxes-Letter-v4.pdf> [http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Healthier\\_Lunchbox\\_Leaflet\\_09\\_10\\_Irish.pdf](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Healthier_Lunchbox_Leaflet_09_10_Irish.pdf) [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie) (Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute website) You will find a leaflet 'Are you packing a healthy lunch' [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie) <http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/healthy-lunchbox-picnic.aspx> [http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch\\_box/lunch\\_box.html](http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch_box/lunch_box.html) <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/packing-school-lunchbox>

#### **Treat Days/Special Occasions**

Friday is treat day. On treat days pupils are allowed a **small** portion from the top shelf of the food pyramid e.g. fun size chocolate bar/small iced bun/biscuits.

Foods with artificial additive and colours e.g. Smarties, M & M's, boiled sweets, cereal bars etc. should be avoided. Special events and celebrations e.g. Green Flag days, food festivals, food demonstrations, end of term parties - on these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "every day food".

#### **Other Considerations**

- Allergies**

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be relayed to all staff.

#### 1. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

##### **Role of Parents:**

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children
- Encourage healthy eating
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To implement school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets to school except on treat day.

##### **Role of Children:**

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets to school except on treat days.

##### **Role of School Staff**

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum.

#### 1. **Responsibility for review:**

A policy review will take place in Spring 2023

#### 1. **Communication and Ratification**

A copy of the reviewed policy will be sent to all parents and a copy will be included in the enrolment pack for new pupils. The policy will be published on the school website ([www.scoilmhuirekilvemnon.ie](http://www.scoilmhuirekilvemnon.ie))

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Chairperson)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_