

Achonry N.S. Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Body + Healthy Mind = Healthy Life

Introductory Statement

Good nutrition is essential for school children. We are working to achieve healthy-eating, increase physical activity and promote positive mental health in our school. The policy is reflective of the work of staff, children and parents.

In consultation with the Principal, staff and Board of Management, a sub-committee of the staff

reviewed and updated the school's healthy eating policy. The involvement of teachers, parents and older children (each important role models) in drawing up the draft policy ensures that children receive consistent messages both at home and at school.

Rationale

Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of children and as such is part of the holistic education that Achonry NS advocates in its education philosophy and mission statement. The adoption of a whole school approach ensures that healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of school life. We decided to work on this area as we felt that life can be very busy and guidelines about healthy lunches will be helpful. Through this and other policies we hope to encourage healthy lifestyles. The DES also encourages healthy lifestyles in our schools. As part of the 'Social, Personal and Health Education' (S.P.H.E.) Programme - SPHE Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum J. Infants - 6th Class Making choices (See Teacher Guidelines pp 11-13) we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the 'Physical Education' programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The 'Science' curriculum - Science Strand Living Things: Strand Unit: Myself: Human Life Processes (Curriculum J. Infants - 6th Class) (See Teacher Guidelines p.10-11) also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops. This policy is also linked to our Wellbeing Policy and Practice

Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In accordance with our aim to develop the pupils to the best of their ability, we see ourselves as having a role in the process of enabling pupils to increase control over and improve their health. The Food and Nutrition strand in our SPHE plan helps us promote this policy in our school.

Aims

- To assist all involved in our school community-children, parents and staff to develop positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that

good foods make to health.

- To improve the opportunities for our children to grow into healthy adults and to heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet.
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage children to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre- prepared food, juice cartons etc.

Guidelines (content of policy)

Current practice in the school is the promotion of healthy eating every day of the week. No food is allowed during class (unless as needed by children with particular dietary requirements).

What is a healthy lunch? A healthy lunchbox includes food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid (see Achonry NS Tips on Healthy Lunch Boxes)

- It is full of goodness like protein, vitamins and minerals, especially calcium for healthy and teeth.
- Contains food with no sugar, because too much sugar is bad for your teeth.
- Contains no artificial colourings, flavourings or additives.
- Gives us strength and energy.
- Makes us fit and healthy.
- Helps our brain power.

What should not be in a healthy lunch?

- Crisps, salted nuts or popcorn.
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies.
- Chewing gum.
- Cake, biscuits, pastries or doughnuts.
- Chocolate spread.
- Fizzy drinks.
- Flavoured milk.

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch ?

- Water.
- Fruit juices.
- Diluted drinks.
- Milk.
- Actimel.
- Smoothies.

What drinks should not be allowed ?

- Fizzy drinks.
- Sugary drinks.
- Hot drinks (in case we spill them).

Nuts/ Nut Allergies

Due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils in our school, we ask parents/ guardians to be vigilant in the following:

- Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches
- Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts such as Nutella, and nut based breads and cereal/health bars containing nuts
- Ask children not to share their lunches.

A strict "Nut Free Zone" policy will be in place in classes with specific pupils with nut allergies. This will be communicated to the parents/guardians concerned through Aladdin. Achonry NS cannot guarantee that all parents / guardians in our school will comply with the above and, for that reason, our school does not purport to be a "nut free school".

Parents should inform the school if a child is on a special diet or has an allergy i.e. nut. Once teachers are aware of a child's special needs they can advise against swapping and sharing of food.

Healthy School Environment

- Through the staff, children, website, BOM and parents association every effort will be made to communicate with and encourage parents to support the healthy eating policy.
- A copy of the Food Pyramid will be displayed in each classroom and teachers will be encouraged to refer to it regularly.
- National campaigns can be used as opportunities to focus on healthy eating messages. The school will organise a healthy eating week periodically to highlight the policy.
- Children eat their lunch while supervised in classrooms. Un-eaten lunches may be finished after break when permitted.
- Children are encouraged to drink water/fluids at specified times during the school day.
- *If children bring "discouraged" food / drinks to school:* - They will be reminded of the Healthy Eating Policy and they will be encouraged to bring a healthy alternative in future. If they persist in bringing unhealthy food to school, the teacher will inform parents re healthy eating Policy throughout the school
- The school will not apply further sanctions.

Exceptions

- Friday Treat. Please be reminded that the children are permitted a **SMALL TREAT ONLY**.
- End of term parties
- School trips
- School events - Pancake Tuesday etc.

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 "discouraged" foods to school apart from small treats on the exceptions listed above.

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 unhealthy food to school
- To bring re-usable bottles, plastic boxes, paper lunchbags, kitchen roll.
- Not to bring cartons, tinfoil, plastic bags and to bring waste food and packaging home (this is in conjunction with our Anti-Litter Policy)

Role of School:

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To occasionally monitor healthy lunches in the classroom.

Success Criteria

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy will be conducted through:

- Continued observation
- Reduction in the number of incidents where children are bringing "discouraged" foods and drinks to school
- Increased awareness among children on healthy eating
- Children making healthy food choices
- Feedback from parents / guardians
- End of year review and recommendations.

The children of Achonry N.S. are very keen to have healthy lunches and show a good understanding of what that means. They are also keen to increase their levels of physical activity. Our school will strive to promote positive mental health by using mindfulness and positive rewards/thinking in all classes. We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices for healthy bodies for all in our school community.

Timeframe for Implementation and Review

Ratification and Communication

Parents can now review a draft of this policy which is now published on the website. Any comments and suggestions can be communicated to the school.

The Board of Management will formally ratify the policy after a review has taken place.

PYRAMID POINTERS - FOR HEALTHY CHOICES

Choose from the four food groups for healthy choices at break-time and lunchtime.

(A) Bread, Cereals and Potatoes

For starchy carbohydrates and fibre

Breads of all kinds (baps, crusty, wholemeal, soda, pitta), tortillas, rolls, scones, crackers, pancakes, bread sticks, rice cakes, oat cakes, popcorn, potato cakes, banana bread, carrot cake, flap jacks, muesli bars, pizza slices.

Plenty of these to Go...Go...Go!

(B) Fruit and Vegetables

For Vitamins and Minerals

Fresh fruit - small apples, grapes, satsumas, kiwi and pears are popular with children. Dried fruit - raisins, sultanas, apricot, banana, pineapple. Single-serving tinned fruit with ring pulls, fruit juice, homemade vegetable soup, vegetable sticks, wedges and smoothies.

Plenty of these to help you glow!

(C) Milk and Dairy Products

Protein and Calcium rich foods

Milk, yoghurt, fromage frais, yoghurt drinks, cheese, cheese strings and smoothies.

Dairy Foods help bones to grow!

(D) Meat, Fish, Chicken, Eggs and alternatives

All lean meats (beef, lamb, pork), chicken, turkey, tinned tuna or salmon, seeds, eggs, beans.

Iron-rich Foods for healthy blood flow!

SUPER SAMBO IDEAS LOVEY LUNCH COMBINATIONS

Monday's lunch is filling and delicious....

Tuesday's lunch is fun but nutritious....

Wednesday's lunch helps us work and play

Thursday's lunch keeps us going all day....

Friday's lunch leaves room for a treat in a lunch that's tasty and good to eat....

Instead of Bread?

Try pitta pockets, wholemeal or brown bread, baps, rolls, French crusty breads, tortillas, crackers, rice cakes or oat cakes Try triple decker sandwiches for variety using a combination or white and brown bread.

Filling Fillers

- grated, chopped or sliced fruit and vegetables for variety in colour and texture
- salad vegetables will add crunch to lean sliced chicken, turkey, beef, ham or cheese
- grated carrot, beansprouts or chopped peppers as alternatives or additions
- chopped boiled egg, scallions, cucumber and a little low fat mayonnaise
- cheese and apple or pear
- tinned tuna and sweetcorn with a little low fat mayonnaise
- grilled rasher, lettuce and tomato
- ham and pineapple
- chicken, raisin, grated carrot with a little curry powder and low fat mayonnaise
- tinned salmon, chopped cucumber and a little low fat mayonnaise

Resources for Promoting Healthy Eating

- "Taste Buds" - safefood
- "Healthy lunchboxes" - safefood
- "MediaWise" - safefood
- "Nutrition Standards for School Meals" - Healthy Ireland
- "A Good Practice Guide to School Food Initiatives" - safefood
- "A Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs" - safefood
- Incredible Eddibles
- Food Dudes

Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy was last reviewed in March 2024 . It will be communicated to the staff and the school community as appropriate. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or as the need arises, in accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in Achonry National School.

Signed: _____
(Fr. Peter Gallagher -Chairperson, Board of Management)

This policy will be ratified by the BOM at the next BOM meeting.

Review Date:

Signed by Chairperson:

