

Claddaghduff National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy is intended to encourage children to get into good dietary habits. “Children’s eating habits will strongly influence his/her chances of living a healthy life-style”. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Rationale:

Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community: children, families and teachers. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in Claddaghduff N.S.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy

- To promote a whole school approach to healthy eating and nutrition
- To understand the benefit of a healthy well-balanced diet
- To develop an awareness that good eating habits formed in early childhood influence health and wellbeing throughout our lives
- To raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food
- To provide members of staff, parents/guardians and those involved in school activities with clear information.

Objectives

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, developing and staying healthy.
- To enable each child to accept some responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Curriculum links

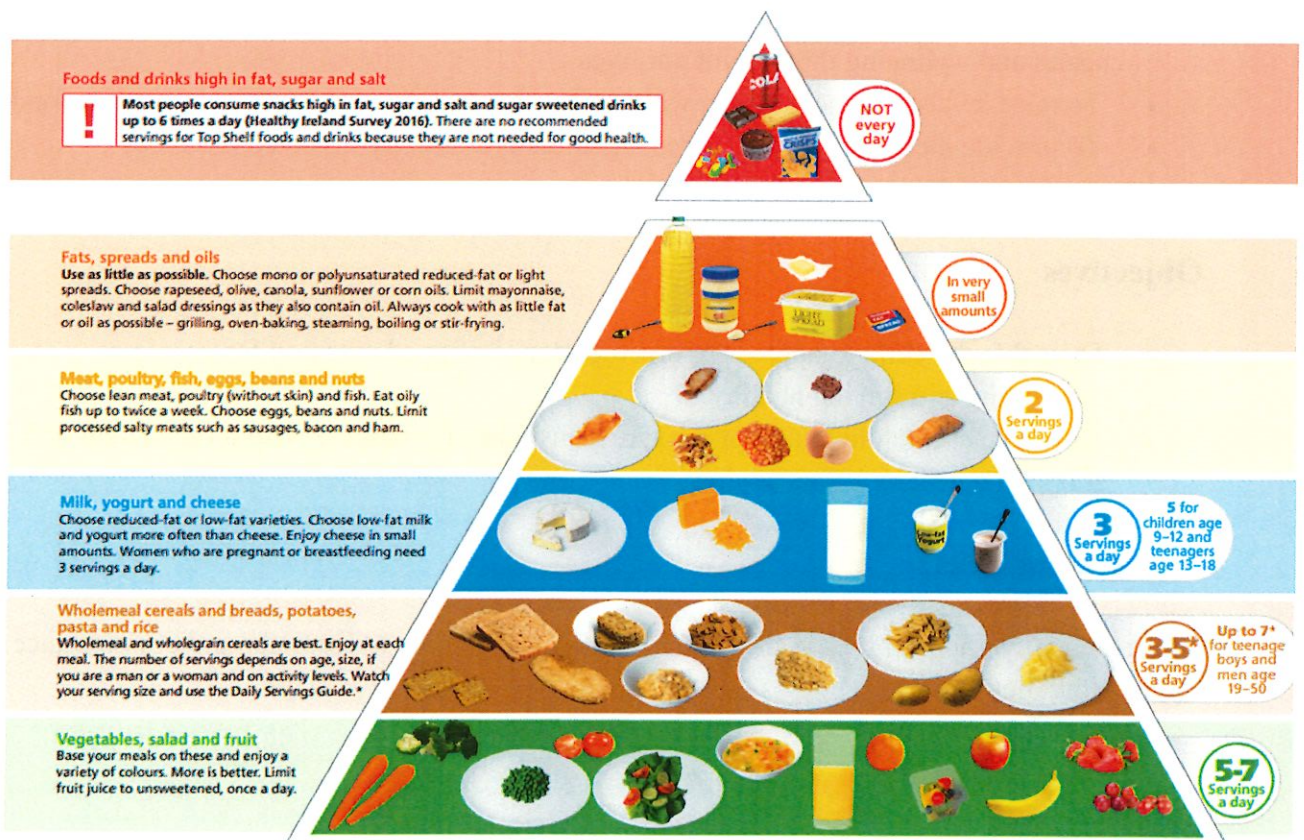
There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum to learn about the importance of a healthy diet.

- 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.
- Healthy food and nutrition forms part of the science curriculum.
- In keeping with our Green Schools status, all food packaging and uneaten food must be taken home.

Healthy Lunch options:

We encourage children to choose from the following foods regularly:

Snacks	Drinks
whole-meal muffins, raisins, flapjacks, raw vegetables, fruit, seeds, dried fruit, fruit yoghurts, crackers, fromage frais or bread	Water and milk
Carbohydrates	Fillings
Whole-grain breads, rolls, bagels, wraps, oatcakes, crackers, pasta, rice or rice cakes	Cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, coleslaw or salad
Fruit	Raw Vegetables
Apple, orange, banana, grape, pear, plum, kiwi, melon, grapefruit, pineapple etc.	carrots, peppers, cucumber, broccoli, tomatoes, sweetcorn etc.



Special Treats

In our school we allow a small treat on a Friday only and it is up to parents to decide whether or not they wish to give their child a treat. As with all food groups, appropriate portion size should be considered regarding the Friday treat. For example, funsize chocolate bars as opposed to a standard one.

Foods that we do not encourage:

- Sweets (except as a Friday treat)
- Frubes (maximum one per lunch)
- Chewing Gum
- Lollipops
- Crisps
- Fizzy drinks
- Chocolate spread
- Cereal bars due to the high sugar content (except as a Friday treat)
- Chocolate or Chocolate bars (except as a Friday treat)
- Biscuits (except as a Friday treat)
- Cakes, buns and pastries (except as a Friday treat)
- Chocolate Coated rice cakes (except as a Friday treat)

If children bring any of the above foods or drinks into school they will be asked by the class teacher to bring it home. Exceptions may occur for the following reasons (but should apply sparingly):

- Celebratory Days such as Hallowe'en/ Easter/ Christmas holidays, sports day, school trip etc.
- Reward treats may be given to pupils for collective/ individual achievements.

Special Dietary/ Medical Requirements:

Parents of children with special dietary requirements are required to make an appointment with a member of school management to discuss the implications of this policy.

Packing the Lunch Box:

Children's portion sizes have gotten bigger over the last number of years. Children should be able to eat their lunches in a reasonable amount of time. Children should be able to unwrap and eat their lunches by themselves. It is not possible for teachers to open or close lunches in a classroom full of children. Please help by not giving products that they cannot open themselves e.g. foods with wrappers, unpeeled oranges etc. To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g. fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut). Parents must ensure that lunch boxes contain whatever utensils are required. As we are trying to

reduce the amount of waste in the school, parents are encouraged to reduce the amount of packaging in their child's lunch box. Cans and glass bottles are not permitted for safety and litter reasons.

Drinking Plenty of Water

Water is essential for life. Through perspiration (sweating), the body uses water to lower body temperature when it is warm. Regular drinks are necessary to replace fluid lost during the day. Without enough water or fluid in the short-term, the dehydration that results causes tiredness. Water is a tooth friendly drink. The more active a person is, the more fluid is needed to replace fluid lost as sweat. In hot weather, or if playing sports, children should bring extra water to school.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children
- To encourage healthy eating
- To inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To support the school in implementing the schools Healthy Eating Policy

Role of children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch and packaging
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Eating Policy

Role of school:

- The staff will encourage healthy eating
- The staff will educate the children in Health Education
- Children will be encouraged to participate in sporting activities
- Food should be eaten before and after break time, if not finished, the children can bring their unfinished lunch out to the picnic benches on yard
- Food may not be eaten in the toilets

-Class teachers will ask children to take uneaten lunch and packaging home

All school staff will refer to the healthy eating poster in their respective classrooms

-Where teachers use treats as rewards they should only do so on Fridays and end of term days

Success Criteria:

We will know the policy is effective by:

-Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods

-The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff

-The level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom

Ratification and Communication:

The BoM ratified the policy at its meeting on 15th December 2025. The policy has been communicated to all staff and children and is available for view and is available for view in our office upon request and on our website and will be reviewed every 3 years.

Chairperson:  Date: 15th December 2025

Principal:  Date: 15th December 2025

Useful links with ideas for healthy lunches:

- *Healthy Eating - School Lunchboxes:*

<https://www.safefood.net/family-health/schoollunchbox>

- *How much sugar?*

<https://www.hollandandbarrett.ie/the-health-hub/food-drink/howmuch-sugar-should-you-have-a-day>

- *HSE: How to eat well:*

<https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/healthy-eating/how-to-eat-well/>

