



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

# Healthy eating policy

Revised: 2024

[www.strangsmillsns.ie](http://www.strangsmillsns.ie)  
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## Healthy Eating Policy

This Policy has been developed to further the promotion of Health in St. Patrick's NS. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we encourage the 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 (e.g. 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).

### Rationale

As a Primary school we are encouraged by the Department of Education and Skills as well as the Department of Health to promote healthy eating amongst our pupils. We are asked to contribute to the realisation of a healthy active population and heightening the awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Recent research has highlighted disturbing trends including an increase in childhood obesity and diabetes. Therefore our policy and government guidelines are both timely and critical for the health and development of children.

### Aims

1. To promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum
2. To ensure that food provision in school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils, e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
3. To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience.

### 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 and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

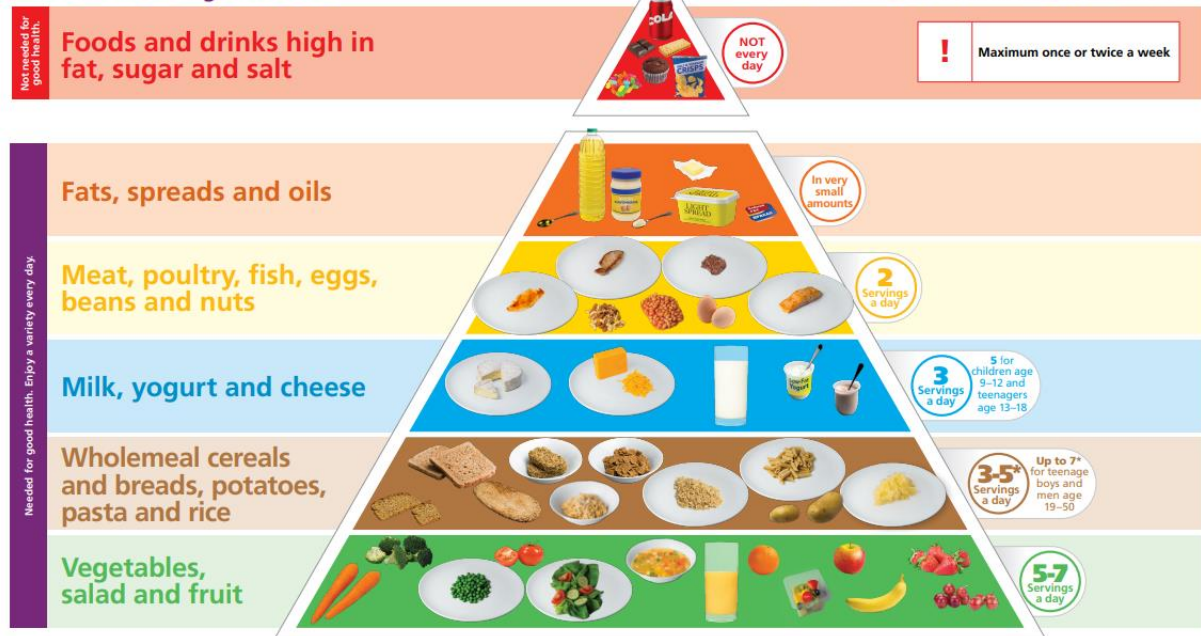
Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage). We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start of Junior Infants.

### Definition:

A healthy lunch is one packed full of goodness. Children need a wide variety of foods to help them grow, learn and play. A healthy lunchbox is an important part of the school day. The food pyramid is a useful tool to help us ensure a healthy, balanced lunchbox. The following are the suggested **servings for lunch** as based on the food pyramid:

## The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children. Please ensure all lunch items can be independently opened by your child.

### Snacks for small break:

- ✓ Pots of yogurt – plain or fruit
- ✓ Plain rice cakes
- ✓ Breadsticks or crackers with hummus
- ✓ Reduced fat cheese
- ✓ Fruit – apples, oranges, banana, kiwi, berries, grapes, melon etc
- ✓ Chopped vegetables – carrots, celery, peppers, cucumber etc
- ✓ *Very occasionally* – a plain biscuit, plain bun, handful of popcorn(no bags of popcorn)

### Examples of healthy lunches – ideas for each of the food groups

#### *Bread/cereals/potato group:*

Sliced wholemeal bread, wholegrain wraps/rolls/pitta breads/bagels, crackers, pasta, spaghetti, rice, rice cakes, bread sticks, oat cakes, cous cous

#### *Fruit and vegetable group:*

Vegetables cooked or raw e.g. cucumber, carrots, celery, peppers, hummus, broccoli  
Salad vegetables e.g. lettuce, tomato, cucumber, sweet corn, spinach, salad leaves

#### *Milk, cheese, yogurt:*

Pots of yogurt – natural or fruit, cheese – slices, grated or cubed

#### *Meat, fish and alternatives:*

Sliced meats – ham, turkey, chicken, salami, fish - tuna, salmon, egg

### Healthy drinks:

Water and Milk

**Hot school meals:**

From April 2024 we will be taking part in the hot school meals programme as offered by the Department of Social protection. Meals chosen will be of healthy standard to ensure nutritious meals are being offered by the company and in line with healthy eating guidelines.

**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 but not limited to the following:

- ***All nuts and nut containing products including Nutella (due to students with serious allergies)***
- Fizzy drinks
- Sweets (including fruit winders)
- Any Chocolate food including biscuits/bars/rice cakes/cereal bars/croissants/Nutella
- Chewing gum
- Crisps
- Fast food e.g. sausage rolls, nuggets, hot dogs etc.
- Cereal bars

**Treats**

There will be occasional treats given to the children and on days such as holidays, special occasions children may be allowed to bring in sweets etc. Rather than using treats as a reward for children, teachers are encouraged to use physical activity such as Go-Noodle, extra yard time or extra PE time.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or other healthy foods in their lunchboxes as part of the 'food dudes' programme.

**Food allergies and food intolerances (including coeliac disease):**

Staff must be made aware if any of the children have any allergies or intolerances including, but not limited to:

- ✓ Peanuts and tree nuts
- ✓ Wheat (gluten)
- ✓ Sesame seeds
- ✓ Fish and shellfish
- ✓ Dairy products
- ✓ Eggs
- ✓ Soya

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

***Any food that may contain traces of peanut are not allowed.***

There is a total ban on all nuts in their whole form due to serious allergies of some of our pupils. We ask you to be vigilant in the following:

- avoid any types of nuts in school lunches
- avoid peanut butter and Nutella
- any food that contains traces of peanuts

If these foods, or any of the food that we ask children not to bring in to school are brought in, teachers will ask the child to bring the food home again.

Children are asked not to swap lunches.

**Green Flag School**

We are trying to reduce the amount of waste in the school as we are a 'Green School' so we ask parents to please try and reduce the amount of packaging in your child's lunch box or use re-usable packaging.

Our green school motto is: ***"This is a war we can win, put it in the right bin!"***

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

- take home (in lunchboxes) all uneaten food, wrappings, containers and cartons
- not to bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

**Promotion of physical activity:**

This school year we are seeking to renew our Active Schools Flag for our work on remaining an active school. Each year we now participate in Active schools week in term 3.

**Success Criteria:**

The school evaluates the success of the policy through;

- a) Feedback from all staff
- b) Feedback from parents and children
- c) Evidence of positive and healthy attitudes towards food

**Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on April 16<sup>th</sup> 2024 and will be implemented from term 3. This policy will be reviewed again in 2027/2028.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Chairperson of the Board of Management*