

Healthy Eating Policy



**Letterkenny
Educate Together**
National School
ag fás le chéile - ag foghlaim le chéile

Healthy Eating Policy within Letterkenny Educate Together National School.

Introductory Statement

At Letterkenny Educate Together children are encouraged to be aware of and learn about healthy eating to promote health, wellbeing and the energy and enthusiasm that enable them to enjoy their experience of school and to be actively engaged in their learning. Letterkenny Educate Together is a 'Nut free School'. This is due to pupils who are anaphylaxis to nuts and this rule is strictly enforced.

Rationale

Letterkenny Educate Together N.S. recognises that the primary responsibility for pupils' nutrition lies with the parent, the school ethos has a child-centred approach and healthy eating is accepted as being good for the health of each child and can help enable each child to reach his or her potential.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Equality based: To ensure sensitivity to ethical beliefs regarding food, all food brought to the classroom for sharing will be agreed with class teachers.

Child-centred: Our school cherishes all pupils equally and strives to aid them in achieving their true potential. Healthy eating promotes the child's wellbeing and in-school healthy eating will establish a good foundation for children's eating

Democratically run: To ensure sensitivity to parental choice regarding their children's diet. All food brought to the classroom for sharing will be agreed with class teachers. The policy was drawn up after consultation with the whole school community; reviews will be conducted in the same manner.

Co-educational: Adoption of a Healthy Eating Policy promotes equality and fairness in the classroom if it is applied uniformly. A healthy diet is to be promoted among male and female students equally.

Aims:

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of each child
- To promote the health of the children and to provide a foundation for healthy living

Objectives:

To enable the children to learn and appreciate the importance of good nutrition

To encourage the children to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet

THE HEALTHY LUNCH:

Children are encouraged to take the nutritionally balanced and free school lunch supplied by Glanmore Foods but in the event that their parents chose not to do so, children will be encouraged to bring at least three of the following:

Protein filled sandwich/wrap/roll (e.g. salad, cheese, cold meat, tuna) • Piece of fruit: (apple, orange, grapes, strawberries, blueberries) • Yoghurt • Chopped vegetables. • Rice/rice cakes • Popcorn • crackers • seeds • pasta • salad

Glanmore Foods Lunches

Children are given the option of ordering a free lunch bag containing 3 healthy of your choice, including fruit, snacks, yogurt, sandwiches, crackers, wraps, baps and popcorn. While Glanmore Foods lunches are healthy, low in sugar, and portion controlled parents are welcome to supplement these lunches with food from home as necessary. The menu is available online at <https://www.glanmorefoods.ie/> or through the office and orders can be changed at any time.

School Lunch Breaks

There are two 20 minute breaks during the school day.

Food is eaten at tables in the classroom. The children wash their hands before eating. For the purpose of recycling, and to cut down costs in school, we ask that all of our children take home their waste packages, leftover food etc. in the lunch bags/boxes to dispose of in their home bins.

Allergies

Because of the risk of severe reactions to allergies, we ask that no nuts be brought into the school. Allergies also dictate that the sharing of food should be avoided, and we would appreciate it if parents would advise and remind their children of this.

Independent Eating

We would like to encourage independent eating at all times and at all ages: children, if they have them in their lunch boxes, should be able to open and eat a yogurt without spilling; peel a banana or an orange, open a cheese string or a drink bottle etc. Each child should also be enabled to sit at the table and eat calmly. Lunch times can be a good opportunity for socialising, chatting and making friends however the teacher may allocate a certain amount of time for silent eating to ensure all children eat their lunches.

Drinks

Although the Safe-Food Healthy Lunchbox Leaflet suggests unsweetened juice as a drink for mealtimes; water and milk are the best drinks. The school encourages children to bring only water and milk to school. Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage. Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school. Filtered water is available throughout the day if they need to refill their bottles. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.

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

Juice drinks/ Squashes

Sweets

Biscuits/bars

Cereal bars with high sugar content

Chocolate spread

Sweet baked goods

Dessert Style Yoghurts

Processed Fruit Snacks

Chewing gum

Nut products (due to allergies)

********Treat Days will only take place on certain Fun Fridays and special occasions (decided by the class teacher or school).***

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

Birthdays/Parties/ 'Treats'

While we are happy to fully acknowledge each child's birthday, we discourage cakes, sweets and party bags. Not only do these 'treats' not fit in with our Healthy Eating policy, giving them out to the class also takes up a lot of teaching and learning time throughout the year and can put pressure on other parents to supply similar treats on their children's birthdays. Every child in the school is made to feel special on their birthday. If in doubt, please consult with the class teacher.

Best Practice

- Ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast
- Eat small regular meals, not one big meal each day
- Children who take physical exercise each day will have a better appetite for healthy food
- The children will bring home uneaten lunch.

Roles and Responsibilities in implementing our policy:

Parents are responsible for ordering/providing a healthy school lunch for their child(ren).

Children are encouraged to participate in ordering their own healthy school lunch with their parents.

Teachers will explicitly teach about healthy eating as part of the SPHE curriculum (see appendix one for links to SPHE curriculum).

LETNS will review our Healthy Eating Policy every two years.

The Board of Management will review this policy every second year.

This policy was reviewed in January, 2021 and again in April, 2024.

Please see Circular 0013/2016 Circular for further information on promoting healthy lifestyles in primary schools.

Ratified by BOM on _____

Chairperson: _____

Appendix 1

SPHE

Food and Nutrition

<p>Class: Infants</p> <p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 17</p> <p>Become aware of the importance of food for growth and development Food provides energy for work and play, food helps to protect against illness, food helps us to grow</p> <p>Explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet Treats, snacks, fruit, vegetables, foods that are unhealthy for some people and are not for others</p> <p>Discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food</p> <p>Fruit, vegetables, foods that can be eaten at breakfast, foods that are grown, food that comes from animals</p> <p>Realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat.</p>
<p>Class: First & Second Classes</p> <p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 27</p> <p>Explore the importance of food for promoting growth, keeping healthy and providing energy. Appreciate that balance, regularity and moderation are necessary in the diet The food pyramid, the need for a balanced diet, the importance of having an appropriate intake of liquids, food that is unhealthy for some people and is not for others</p> <p>Identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources.</p> <p>Realise & practise good hygiene when dealing with food.</p>
	<p>Objectives p. 40</p> <p>Differentiate between a healthy and an unhealthy diet and appreciate the role of balance and moderation</p> <p>Identify the nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet</p> <p>Exploring how diet promotes growth, performance and development</p> <p>Recognise the wide choice of food available and categorise food into four main food groups and their place on the food pyramid Bread, potatoes, cereals</p> <p>Fruit and vegetables</p>

<p>Class: Third & Fourth Classes</p> <p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Milk, cheese and yoghurt</p> <p>Meat, fish and alternatives</p> <p>Examine the dietary needs of his/her own age group and other groups in society. Explore some factors that influence the consumption of different food products Presentation and packaging, shelf life, advertising, imported or home-produced, price, consumer demand</p> <p>Discuss and examine the importance of proper food hygiene.</p>
<p>Class: Fifth & Sixth Classes</p> <p>Strand: Myself</p> <p>Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 57</p> <p>Appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.</p> <p>Realise and accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet</p> <p>Exploring and examining the food pyramid</p> <p>Recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet and the food products in which they are found</p> <p>Macro-nutrients: protein, carbohydrate, fat micro-nutrients: vitamins and minerals</p> <p>Explore the factors that influence food choices</p> <p>Cost, advertising, demand, peer pressure, advertising and packaging, value for money, time for shopping and for cooking, ideal body images</p> <p>Explore and examine some of the illnesses particularly associated with food intake or special health conditions</p> <p>coeliac, diabetic, anorexia, bulimia, the dietary needs of different age groups and individuals</p> <p>Become aware of the importance of hygiene and care in the preparation and use of food</p> <p>Using before sell-by date, reading contents, not chopping cooked foods and uncooked foods on the same board</p>

Appendix II

Standard note to be included in lunch boxes:

Dear parent/guardian,

Following advice from the Health Service Executive and to help work done at curricular level, **the school is trying to promote Healthy Eating among the children and staff.** We ask you to **support us in this by not sending in food on the 'not to be brought' list.** If you would like to read the full Healthy Eating Policy or discuss any concerns please contact the class teacher.

Thank you.