

Scoil Mhuire Senior School Healthy Eating Policy

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

The school currently supplies a healthy lunch to children who wish to avail of it. The annual charge is 10 euro. This money is not a charge for the food which is free. It helps to pay the wages of the person employed to distribute the food daily.

You can arrange this option for your child by contacting the school secretary.

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).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we will introduce a healthy eating policy early in the school year 2013/14.

Aims

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
3. To foster healthy eating habits at an early age.

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).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children.

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls,
Rice – wholegrain
Pasta – wholegrain
Cheese scones
Wraps
Potato salad
Wholemeal scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Pitta bread

Savouries

Lean Meat
Chicken/Turkey
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Eggs
Jam
Cheese
Quiche
Pizza
Flapjacks
Rice cakes
Corn cakes

Fruit & Vegetables

(All types)
Apples, Banana, Peach
Rice, Sweet Corn
Salads
Mandarins, Orange segments,
Fruit Salad, Dried fruit, Raisins
Plum, Pineapple cubes
Grapes, Kiwi, Melons
Cucumber, Sweetcorn
Tomato,
Coleslaw.
Carrot sticks,
Sweet pepper sticks/pieces
Nuts

Drinks

Milk and Water
Soup
Smoothies
Fruit juices
Squashes, i.e. low sugar
Yoghurt

In particular instances, some children are allergic to specific foods. Where this is the case, these children's classmates do not include those foods in their lunch packs. Food items causing allergic reactions often include nuts, and products with nut content and certain fruit such as kiwi. A whole school ban on a particular food item may also have to be implemented if the nature of the allergy warranted it.

Cereal Bars and Popcorn

Some cereal bars have a high sugar content. Rather than including or excluding cereal bars, we ask parents/guardians to make decisions taking the particular bar ingredients into account.

Some children bring large bags of popcorn into school. They do not have the time to eat it all during lunch time in the classroom. The result is, the popcorn is often spilled in the yard, or the classroom or even in the

child's bag. If you occasionally give your child popcorn, please only give him/her a small container.

A word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

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
- Sweets
- Chocolate, biscuits, bars

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:

Fats Sugar Sweets etc.	Sparingly
Meat, Fish Peas/Beans	2 portions per day
Milk, Cheese Yoghurt	3+ portions per day
Fruit & Vegetables	4+ portions per day
Bread, Cereals & Potatoes	6+ portions per day

Treat Day

Friday will be our treat day. On this day, children can include one food item from the 'not allowed' list.

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons.
- All leftovers and wrappings from the school lunch scheme are returned to the supplier by the school.

- not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

Promotion of Healthy Eating

Throughout the year, the school will encourage and promote healthy eating at whole school and class level. Activities may include:

- Healthy eating talks by local people
- Class discussions
- Research and presentation on a particular fruit, vegetable or food type
- Recipes
- Food tasting
- SPHE activities

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

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.
It will be reviewed periodically.

Signed: Brian Maginn
Chairperson Board of Management.

Date: 13/11/13