

Oatlands Primary School



Healthy Eating Policy

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Rationale

Through these guidelines Oatlands Primary School aims to help those involved in our whole school community, children, staff and parents, in developing positive attitudes to eating and healthy living. We wish to promote 'the personal development and wellbeing of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. (SPHE Guidelines)

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we encourage the children to become more aware of the benefits of healthy food choices. In addition, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children.

The Science curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding and awareness of how the body grows and develops.

A collaborative approach amongst the teaching staff of this school, the Board of Management and the Parents Committee informed the formulation of this policy. The policy was put together to promote a culture of healthy living within the school community.

School Ethos

This policy complements the ethos of the school in that it fosters a positive atmosphere for the pupils and prioritises the welfare and care of the child. Parents/Guardians are encouraged and motivated to become involved in their child's education from the time they enrol with the school.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

Through education, this policy aims to promote healthy eating. Objectives include:

- To create a positive attitude towards healthy food.
- To promote lifelong healthy eating habits.
- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To enable the child to have some autonomy over their food choices and make wise food decisions.
- To help children improve concentration, learning and energy levels.
- To provide suggestions to parents regarding appropriate lunches for the children.
- To provide the children with opportunities for tasting different healthy foods during the year.

- To advise parents of healthy lunch options and of the school lunch items that are not permitted.
- To incorporate the healthy message through formal SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) lessons and informally throughout the day.
- To run a Healthy Eating Week in school annually.
- To support the schools' Green School Policy by using reusable containers, minimising use of wrappers and by disposing of any waste at home.

Guidelines

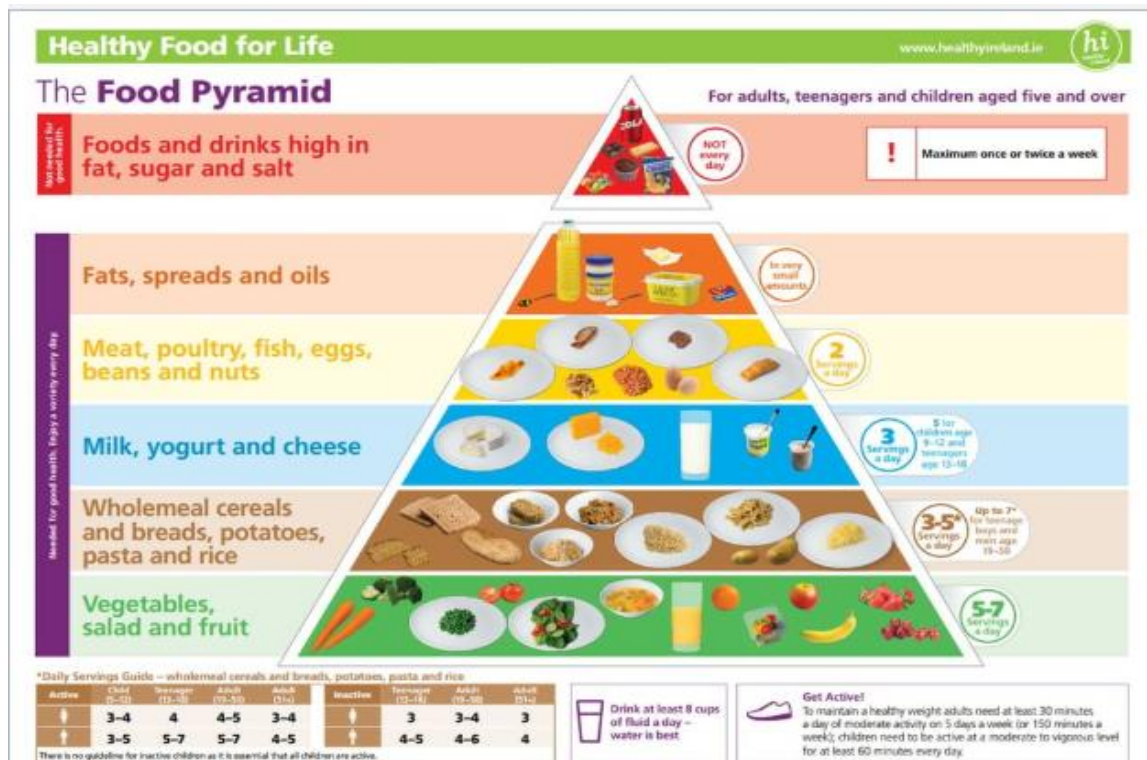
As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green Schools policy, lunches should be packed in recyclable boxes avoiding, where possible, the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. All litter and uneaten food must be taken home. Drinks should be brought into school in a reusable plastic bottle; For safety reasons, glass bottles are not permitted.

As there are children in the school with severe nut allergies, foods containing nuts are not permitted in the school. Children are not allowed share food with another child.

The children are supervised in the classroom while eating their lunch and are not allowed to bring unfinished food outside the classroom. They eat twice during the school day; five minutes before small break and ten minutes before big break.

In order to create a healthy lunchbox, the following are encouraged:

- meat/salad/cheese sandwiches;
- crackers;
- pitta bread;
- pasta;
- fruit and vegetables;
- food that is manageable for younger children e.g. give the child a peeled orange;
- drinks such as water, milk or unsweetened fruit juice. Fluid intake is very important and the children must bring a drink to school every day. Please ensure that your child brings sufficient fluid with them for their school day. On warmer days please bring an extra drink to school.
- The child's age and appetite should be taken into account when deciding on portion size.



Source: HSE Healthy Eating for Families <https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/healthy-eating/families/>

The following are **discouraged**:

- Cereal bars /Flapjacks with high sugar content.
- Messy foods that are not appropriate for school

The following are **not permitted**:

- Foods containing any type of nuts including but not limited to raw nut products, cereal bars, nut spreads (nutella), etc.;
- Fizzy drinks (e.g. Coke, 7up, etc) or Energy drinks of any kind, Sports drinks and drinks with high sugar content;
- Sweets/Jellies;
- Chocolate including but not limited to, chocolate spread, sweets, biscuits, pastries, food containing chocolate ingredients;
- Sweet biscuits/buns/cakes/cupcakes/muffins;
- Crisps/Potato chips (e.g. Taytos);
- Popcorn (It is considered a choking hazard for young children);

- Chewing gum
- Lollipops.

Parents will receive a gentle reminder if unsuitable food appears regularly in lunchboxes.

School staff will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.

Useful Websites for Parents

1. <https://www2.hse.ie/living-well/healthy-eating/families/>
2. http://www.eatingwell.com/recipes_menus/collections/healthy_eating_kids
3. <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/healthy/>
4. <https://www.safefood.net/education/healthy-lunchboxes>
5. <https://www.fooddudes.ie/parents-hub/>
6. <https://www.bordbia.ie/>

Birthdays

Sweet treats for birthdays / after a family holiday such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc. should not be brought into school. Many children have allergies and restricted diets and there may be so many birthdays that sweet treats are available nearly every day. To avoid unnecessary disappointment, parents/guardians should not to send in food for other children for birthdays or any other reason. Birthday cake/treats will not be given out by the school on behalf of parents.

Exceptions

Children may be permitted to bring a treat on certain days, for example school tours/end of term days at the discretion of the class teacher. This will be communicated by the class teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians:

- To provide your child with a healthy lunch every day.
- To discuss the healthy food they have given with their children.
- To discuss any concerns regarding lunches with the class teacher, initially.
- To support your child in making healthy lunch choices. Older children should be encouraged to assist with their lunch preparation.

Teachers:

- To discuss healthy eating with the children on a regular basis.
- To teach lessons on healthy eating as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- To praise children who eat their healthy lunches regularly.
- Discuss with the parents/principal if there are concerns regarding the suitability of a child's lunch.

Principal/Wellbeing team:

- Keeping parents/guardians informed regarding changes in this policy.
- Liaise with the teachers regarding issues pertaining to healthy lunches.
- Write reminders of this policy in letters and newsletters during the school year.

Success Criteria:

- ✓ A positive change visible in the children's lunchboxes
- ✓ Positive feedback from teachers and parents/guardians

Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every three school years, or as needed.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was updated by the Board of Management on 25/02/2025. The policy will be made available on our school website www.oatlandsprimaryschool.ie once ratified.

Reference will be made to the policy in the information for new parents, of children newly enrolled child in the school.

Signed: Christy Mahally
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 25/02/2025

Signed: Sarah M. O'Connell
Principal

Date: 25/02/2025