

Healthy Lunch Policy

Aim:

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at *Cloontuskert NS* 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).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy.

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.

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.

Healthy Lunch Options:

We encourage children to choose from the following foods regularly

- Bread/scones
- Pitta bread
- Fruit
- Raw vegetables/Salads
- Cheese, lean meat, eggs, fish,
- Fruit Juice
- Yoghurt Drinks
- Milk
- Water
- Soup

Treat Foods

We recommend foods such as:

- Fresh fruit
- Raisins
- Yogurt or Yogurt drinks
- Wholegrain/ Digestive biscuits

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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

The 4 Cs are not allowed :
Chewing Gum, **C**risps, **C**hocolate bars, **C**andy

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of Parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children
- Encourage healthy eating
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To implement school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or candy to school

Role of Children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or candy to school

Role of School:

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- If children bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or candy to school they will not be allowed to eat them while in school. If children have these foods and no other food or no food for their lunch arrangements for food will be made by the staff of the school for these children.

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented from 1st March 2016

A copy of *The Healthy Food Pyramid* will be on display in the school and will be referred to regularly.

As part of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum reasons for healthy eating will be discussed with the children regularly by staff.

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Teachers will continue to give children a sweet treat on occasions in recognition of work done, improvements in work or behaviour and in an effort to promote positive behaviour. Sweet treats used prudently by teachers will not interfere with the health of children.

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.

It will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.