



Scoil an Chlochair Convent Primary School

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory statement

Food and drink are an essential part of our daily lives. They play a fundamental role in the development of the human being. Making the right choices to support our nutrition requirements satisfies our physiological needs and also contributes to our mental and emotional development. What we eat and drink is directly related to our state of health.

Childhood is a time for developing the skills to make informed choices and decisions throughout life. What we eat and drink is one such choice. Children need to be aware of the importance of good nutrition for health in order to optimise their growth, health and developmental potential through their early years and beyond.

This policy has been drafted to reflect the ethos of the school. It also incorporates aspects of our Social Personal and Health Education, Physical Education, Green School and Health Promotion policies. It was initiated by a working group drawn from the staff of Convent Primary School including Annemarie Lucey, Jennifer O' Farrell, Maureen Walsh and Niamh Ahern on the 24th of September 2012. This policy was reviewed by staff in February 2022.

Convent Primary is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life. The children will continue to receive consistent messages regarding healthy eating both at home and at school.

Rationale for developing a healthy eating policy

For young people to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. In addition, healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well being. Childhood is a time of physical growth and development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients. Eating a nourishing breakfast and a healthy school lunch allows children to take full advantage of the education provided for them. Our rationale reflects our current good practice in relation to supporting parents and children in making healthy eating choices.

Aims and objectives

The school aims to:

- Provide opportunities for each child to access knowledge, understanding and skills related to healthy eating so that they may make informed choices
- Raise awareness of the concepts of “healthy eating” and balanced diet and their importance in maintaining good health
- Develop a positive attitude towards eating habits
- Provide opportunities within school to pursue a healthy diet
- Help children to understand that some foods should be eaten in moderation
- To work co-operatively with parents for the effective implementation of this policy

Eating Time

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). It is school policy that each child has a healthy lunch in our school.

At **snack time**, children bring one snack to the yard with them. Food at this break should be easy to eat. Ideally a small sandwich or piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

At **lunch-time**, children eat their lunch in the classroom before/after going to the yard to play. Children have approximately 10 minutes to eat at this break.

Ideally, children’s lunches should be varied and include:

- Two portions from the bread/cereal group
- One portion of meat or meat alternative
- At least one portion from the fruit and vegetable group
- One portion from the dairy product
- Water/ milk

Suggestions for your child’s school lunch:

- Breads – whole-grain breads, rolls, bagels, wraps, soda bread or pitta
- Bread substitutes – oatcakes, plain rice cakes, pancakes or crackers
- Fillings – cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, pate, egg, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, coleslaw, salad, or banana
- Hot leftovers in a flask – curry, pasta (with or without sauce), soup/chowder, baked beans, rice, stew, lasagne or noodles
- Cold leftovers

- Fruit – apple, oranges, banana, grapes, pear, plum, peach, apricots, melon, grapefruit, pineapple, strawberries, raspberries, mango, blackberries or blueberries. Remember to peel and/or cut fruit and vegetables into bite-sized pieces for younger children.
- Raw vegetables – tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, carrot sticks, celery sticks, broccoli, cabbage or cucumber

Food items **not** permitted in school:

- Fizzy drinks, fruit flavouring water, sports drinks and drinks/juices with high sugar content
- Chewing gum
- Chocolate (including chocolate spread)
- Sweets & winders
- Crisps including crisp style snacks
- Biscuits/cakes/muffins/traybakes
- Cereal Bars

Such items may be allowed occasionally (e.g. school tours, trip to the cinema, end of term celebrations) at the discretion of the class teacher.

Children are not permitted to put food in the bin. This is to encourage the children to eat the lunch which is provided and to notify parents of the lunch that was eaten. If a child persists in bringing an unhealthy lunch to school, the class teacher will contact their parents/guardians.

Reward/ Celebration Systems

School is an ideal place to teach children that not all celebrations need to revolve around sugary treats. Food is not used as a reward in our classrooms. We encourage alternative rewards. These include homework passes and other privileges. We also include social rewards which involve praise or thanks or simple gestures and other forms of recognition. Stickers and stars are used by teachers are also used as rewards in the classroom.

Food Talk

Children are educated in school about making healthy choices. Discussions include, following the journey of food from farm to fork and growing and eating. This is taught during SESE and SPHE classes. It is also emphasised during Healthy/Active Week. Through our Green Schools Programme children learn to reuse, reduce and recycle.

Green School Policy

There is a policy of litter free lunches in our school. Pupils are not permitted to put food waste in the bin.

Dietary Problems

Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school office or principal.

Current Practices which Promote a Healthy School

- Good Hand Hygiene
- SPHE lessons
- Friendship Week to encourage mental health and wellbeing
- Active Week
- Outside experts invited to visit our school such as dental hygienist, Anti-bullying and mental health speaker and Community Garda
- Daily Mile
- Food Dudes programme
- Physical Education
- Sporting activities such as rugby, football, camogie, swimming, gymnastics

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for child/children
- Encourage healthy eating
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs
- To implement school policy

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

Role of School Staff

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum.

Implementation and Review

Convent Primary will review our Healthy Eating Policy every two years. Our Healthy Eating Policy is available on our school website and school App and as a hard copy from the office if requested. The Board of Management will review this policy every second year.

This policy was first implemented in September 2012. It was reviewed in February 2022 and will be reviewed again in February 2024.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed in March 2022.

Signed: _____
Mr John Lucey (Chairperson
BOM)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Ms Sheila O'Connor
(Principal)

Date: _____