



Healthy Eating Policy 00512D

1. Introduction

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE), our Science Programme and our Code of Behaviour, at Scoil Bhríde Midleton we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. A survey of parents was undertaken in February 2024 to seek their views/suggestions. As a result of this survey, along with consultation of staff members, this Healthy Eating Policy was created. The policy is designed to align with the Hot Schools Meal Programme.

2. Rationale

For young children to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. Research indicates a strong link between nutrition and performance. Children's bodies and brains are still developing, making proper nutrition critical for their growth, cognitive function, and overall health. Introducing nutritious food options at a young age helps children develop healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime, reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases in adulthood.

Implementing a healthy eating policy in primary school is a proactive measure to support the holistic development and well-being of children, laying the foundation for a healthier future generation.

3. Aims

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
2. To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet.
3. To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
4. To raise levels of concentration within the class by way of consumption of healthy food.

3a. Objectives

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
2. To develop a positive attitude towards healthy eating, while also understanding that some occasional treats are still allowed as part of a balanced diet.
3. To enable the child to understand that healthy food is a good source of fuel and energy.
4. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
5. To enable the children to develop a healthy eating habit for life.
6. To involve all stakeholders in the above objectives.

4. Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a safe environment where the welfare of children is paramount to reinforce the ethos of our school.

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.

4a. Hot Lunch Scheme

The hot lunch scheme began operation in Scoil Bhríde in April 2024. The 'School Food 4 Primary' company were chosen as suppliers for their dedication to offering a dedicated healthy food solution to schools across the country. The hot lunch scheme provides a healthy and balanced menu for students in our school, which has been specifically tailored to meet the needs of Scoil Bhríde.

4b. Packed Lunches

For those not opting for the hot lunch option, 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, preferably wholemeal
Rice – wholegrain
Pasta – wholegrain
Potato Salad
Scones
Bread sticks
Crackers
Pitta bread
Quinoa
Couscous

Yogurt

Savouries

Lean Meat
Chicken/Turkey
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Cheese Wholemeal
Hummus

Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach
Mandarins, Orange segments,
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,
Plum, Pineapple cubes
Grapes (cut in halves)
Cucumber, Sweetcorn
Tomato

Drinks

Milk
Water

4c. Banned Food

Aside from 'treat days' (see below), 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 (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, isotonic drinks, juices, powerade, monster, etc.)
- Sweets
- McDonalds or any fast-food takeaways
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Chewing gum
- Kellogg's Fruit winders or similar
- Shop bought Breakfast/Cereal Bars
- Buns/Muffins
- Pastries
- Doughnuts
- Flavoured milk
- Lollipops
- Peanuts and any nut butters
- Nutella and other chocolate spreads
- Pesto (due to nuts)

4d. Treat Day

We ask to only allow treats at:

1. Fridays (one kids sized treat)
2. End of term parties
3. School events (e.g. School tour, Friends of Scoil Bhríde associated treats, birthday parties)

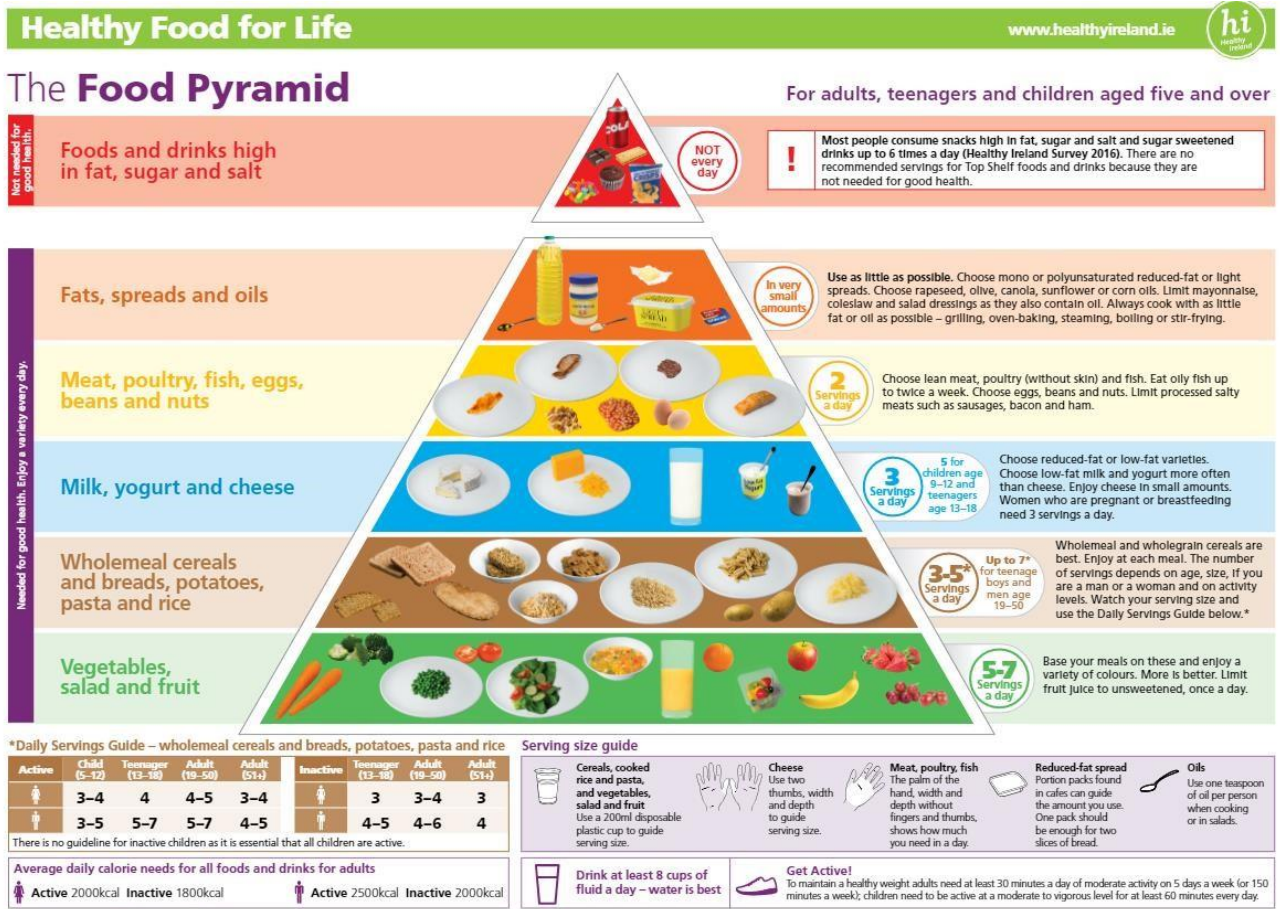
If children bring banned food/drinks to school:

Children will not be allowed to eat/drink these banned foods in school. Any foods not permitted will remain in the pupil's lunchbox. This is in line with our code of behaviour. Teachers will be responsible for informing the principal if there is a persistent breach of the school's Healthy Eating Policy.

5. The Food Pyramid

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

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt	No more than twice a week
Fats spreads and oils	In very small amounts
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts	2 servings per day
Milk, yogurt and Cheese	5-8 year olds need 3 servings a day 9-13 year olds need 5 servings a day
Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice	3-5 servings per day
Vegetables, salads and fruit	5-7 servings per day



6. Promotion of the Policy

The classroom will be used to inform the whole-school practice and help instigate a healthy lifestyle. Health education is not only about delivering information but also about developing the skills and confidence required to make healthy choices, become proactive and have a healthy mind set. These lessons will be given through SPHE, P.E. and Science. Guest speakers will be invited into the classrooms, holding art/ slogan competitions, school assembly, fruit and vegetable sampling events, and cooking demonstrations.

6a. Healthy Eating Event

The school will endeavour to create such events or tie in with other school activities over the course of each academic year.

6b. Alternative Rewards and Incentives

Teachers will implement alternative options to sweets and treats as reward during the school day for various achievements such as reinforcing positive behaviour, appraisal of schoolwork etc. Examples of such alternative rewards and incentives include:

Recognition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates e.g. Student of the Week • Recognition through school assemblies • Photo recognition on notice board in-house • Phone call or note to parents • Week with 'Class Medal/Trophy'
Privileges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choosing a class activity • Extra playtime • Homework pass • Show and tell time • Making a delivery to the office • Sitting on special chair
Whole Class Rewards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden time • Listening to music during lunch • Extra PE time • Eating lunch outdoors • Playing a game together
Stationery, Sports Gear, Toys
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frisbees • Stickers • Step counters • Stencils • Pencil • Colouring book

6c. Baking

Baking is an integral part of Scoil Bhríde, and is frequently used as a methodology to support SPHE, Maths, SESE and English curricular objectives. Baking is also used as an opportunity to expose children to new foods and to teach them life skills such as cooking. It also helps to promote a positive association with healthy food. Healthy recipes will be encouraged to be used as much as possible. An example of some baking ideas can be seen below:

- Vegetable soup
- Toast/ Toasted Sandwiches/ Sandwiches
- Fruit Salads
- Smoothies
- Eggs/ Egg Muffins
- Fruit Porridge/Savoury Porridge
- Homemade Pizza
- Jacket Potatoes
- Simple stir fries/curries

6d. School Garden

The school garden will be used to grow an array of fruit and vegetables such as potatoes, onions and lettuce. This will be used as an opportunity to learn the skills

associated with growing your own fruit and vegetables and learning sustainable practices for life. It also provides an opportunity to reinforce the importance of healthy eating, and cooking with these healthy ingredients.

7. Environmental Awareness

Our Green Schools and Nature Heroes Committees are very proactive groups in our school. As a whole school we are endeavouring to make our school more sustainable to protect our planet. Choosing lower carbon foods, choosing locally produced foods, fruits and vegetables and being aware of where your food is from, are some of the ways we can eat healthily for the planet.

At school we want to reduce as much waste as possible. Therefore, we will endeavour to:

- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons
- All waste will be composted offsite
- not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons
- Use reusable containers for our hot lunches

8. Medical Awareness

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

Please refer to the Scoil Bhríde Administration of Medicines Policy and the Scoil Bhríde Health and Safety Policy. Please note that Scoil Bhríde is a Nut-Free Zone.

8a. Food Sensitivities

While this policy should be promoted and employed by all stakeholders in school i.e. staff, families and children, it is acknowledged that some of our pupils in Scoil Bhríde may have food sensitivities/medical conditions, and in these rare circumstances an exception may be made should these sensitivities impact the child.

9. Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in **April 2024**. It will be reviewed in the event of incidental issues or on the enrolment of child/children with significant medical conditions, but no later than September 2025.

Chairperson of the Board of Management/Date

Implementation:

The policy has been implemented since **April 2024**

