



Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Eating Policy within Holywell Educate Together National School

Rationale

- The school ethos of Holywell Educate Together N.S is child-centred and healthy eating is accepted as being integral to the development of the child. Holywell Educate Together N.S. recognises that the primary responsibility for pupils' nutrition lies with the parent. The focus of this policy is to support parents and pupils in relation to healthy eating habits from an early age. Practical suggestions and photographs of sample lunches that are varied and nutritious are included.

Curricular links regarding children's health include SESE and SPHE:

SPHE:

- Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class. *(See appendix I)*)
- Making choices *(See Teacher Guidelines pp 11-13)*

Science:

- Strand Living Things: Strand Unit: Myself: Human Life Processes (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class) *(See Teacher Guidelines p.10-11)*

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

- **Equality-based:** To ensure sensitivity to ethical beliefs regarding food, any food brought to the classroom will be considered by way of discussion between the parent and class teacher, in line with the healthy eating policy.
- **Child-centred:** Our school cherishes all pupils equally and strives to aid them in achieving their true potential. Healthy eating promotes the child's general well-being in and out of school.
- **Democratically run:** To ensure sensitivity to parental choice regarding their children's diet, any food brought to the classroom will be considered by way of discussion between the parent and the class teacher, in line with the healthy eating policy. The policy was drawn up after consultation with the whole school community including parents, teachers, school employees who are also parents and the School Council President. Reviews will be conducted in the same manner.
- **Co-educational:** Adoption of a Healthy Eating Policy promotes equality and fairness in the classroom if it is applied uniformly. A healthy diet is to be promoted among male and female students equally.

Aims

By introducing this policy the school community hopes:

- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet and the need to exercise regularly
- To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
- To improve levels of concentration within classroom due to consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre- prepared food, juice cartons etc.
- To raise energy levels for physical activities.
- To raise awareness of serious illnesses and allergies within the school community, highlighting foods that cannot be consumed on the school premises' as a result.

General Guidelines

Definition:

A healthy lunch is a well-balanced meal that incorporates nutritious, varied and interesting foods from the main food groups.

- **Parental Involvement:** At the annual parental information evenings parents are informed and reminded of the school's Healthy Eating Policy. They are encouraged to provide healthy lunch options for their children in line with the school policy. The policy will also be available to read on the school website www.holywelletns.ie and on the school app.
- **Healthy School Environment:** To help maintain our Green School status and to keep parents informed of what their children are eating at lunch time, all remaining, uneaten food and food packaging should be brought home in lunch boxes.
- **Class lessons:** Healthy Eating will be taught as prescribed by the National Curriculum.
- **Classroom guidelines** will be followed by teaching staff to support the policy's ongoing implementation.
- **Initiatives:** Invitations will be extended to speakers for both the children and parents as appropriate. The school will engage with any state initiatives such as 'Food Dudes'. In conjunction with the local Children's Park Run and the PTA, the school will consciously endeavour to promote healthy eating by way of new ideas and incentives such as, a school mascot, class rewards, parental and teacher visual reminders, 'fruit days' etc.
- **Healthy Eating Guidelines** by the Health Promotion Unit will be used to guide the sub-committee and by teachers to deliver age-appropriate lessons to children in class.

Classroom Guidelines

- **Food brought in:** Children should be continually encouraged to bring in healthy lunches. To safeguard parental choice children will be discouraged from sharing their lunch box food with other children. Uneaten food will be sent home to inform parents of the child's eating habits. (A list of agreed food choices are included in Appendix III)
- If a child brings red-listed foods to school the food will be sent home, except in the unlikely event of the child being left with nothing substantial to eat. A standard note asking for parents to support the Healthy Eating Policy will be included (see Appendix II). If a pattern develops, the matter will be discussed with the child's parents in order to offer support in following the policy. It is the parents' responsibility to pack a healthy lunch. It is recognised that children do not always have control over what is packed for lunch and therefore cannot be unreasonably penalised.
- **Independent eating:** While being consistent with the policy parents are requested to send in food they know their children will enjoy and eat. Parents are encouraged to consider including easily opened items and fruit peeled at home. This is particularly relevant for Junior Infant classes
- **Special diets:** It is recognised that children may be on special diets due to illness or sensory difficulties. Flexibility exists within the policy to ensure the well-being of each child is central to decisions and in these instances the school will allow red-listed foods to be consumed.
- **Allergies:** Parents will be asked to inform the school of any known food allergies and every precaution will be taken in order to ensure that children who suffer from allergies will not be exposed to allergens within the classroom. **It is vital that any ban on a food item is followed rigidly to safeguard school members who have life-threatening allergies.**
- **Treats:** Treats may be given to promote and support the healthy eating practices of the school. Occasional treats may be provided or accepted at the discretion of the classroom teacher, in line with curricular teaching, Learn Together or Good Behaviour incentives.
- **Shared food:** In line with school ethos, festivals and other cultural events may be celebrated with a wide variety of food, particularly those traditionally associated with the event. Flexibility in the policy will allow this. Food sent in by parents for different occasions and food preparation in school must always be discussed and planned for with the class teachers. Parents of all children will be asked to list anything they prefer their children not to eat.
- **Eating time:** The balance between eating and playtime will continue to be monitored and reviewed by the school. Children are encouraged to eat in the classroom, immediately before both breaks. All children are provided with equal time to eat in their classroom. The class teacher will have the children engage in some aspect of their learning while eating.
- **Birthdays:** No treats or cakes should be brought in for a child's birthday.

- **Litter & Waste:** Waste from lunch boxes will be sent home as agreed by the Green School committee. Environmentally friendly methods of packing and carrying food will be encouraged.
- **Water:** Children are encouraged to keep a water bottle in the classroom and to drink water throughout the day. 'One use', disposable bottles are not allowed in the school and should be replaced by a rigid, plastic or a metal bottle.
- **Portion Sizes:** In keeping with recommended HSE guidelines, the average calorie intake for an 8 year old child should not exceed 1800. This should be reflected in a child's lunch. See appendix III photographs for examples of recommended lunch portions.

Roles and Responsibility

- Children will be supported in taking continuing ownership of this policy.
- Parents are responsible for packing healthy lunches consistent with this policy.
- Each member of the school community: children, staff and parents will promote this policy.
- Teachers will give good examples through their own healthy eating habits.

Timeframe for Implementation

- The policy was informally launched in 2012, ongoing implementation will be part of daily school life.

Timeframe for Review

- This policy will be regularly reviewed at ISM, staff and whole-school level.

Responsibility for Review

- Pupils
- Parents
- Staff
- Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

- The policy has been ratified by The Board of Management of Holywell Educate Together NS.

Appendix I

• **SPHE**

Food and Nutrition

<p>Class: Infants Strand: Myself Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 17 Become aware of the importance of food for growth and development Food provides energy for work and play, food helps to protect against illness, food helps us to grow Explore food preferences and their role in a balanced diet Treats, snacks, fruit, vegetables, foods that are unhealthy for some people and are not for others Discuss and explore some qualities and categories of food Fruit, vegetables, foods that can be eaten at breakfast, foods that are grown, food that comes from animals Realise the importance of good hygiene when preparing food to eat.</p>
<p>Class: First & Second Classes Strand: Myself Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 27 Explore the importance of food for promoting growth, keeping healthy and providing energy. Appreciate that balance, regularity and moderation are necessary in the diet The food pyramid, the need for a balanced diet, the importance of having an appropriate intake of liquids, food that is unhealthy for some people and is not for others Identify some of the foods that are derived from plant and animal sources. Realise & practise good hygiene when dealing with food.</p>
<p>Class: Third & Fourth Classes Strand: Myself Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Objectives p. 40 Differentiate between a healthy and an unhealthy diet and appreciate the role of balance and moderation Identify the nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet Exploring how diet promotes growth, performance and development Recognise the wide choice of food available and categorise food into four main food groups and their place on the food pyramid Bread, potatoes, cereals Fruit and vegetables Milk, cheese and yoghurt Meat, fish and alternatives Examine the dietary needs of his/her own age group and other groups in society. Explore some factors that influence the consumption of different food products Presentation and packaging, shelf life, advertising, imported or home-produced, price, consumer demand Discuss and examine the importance of proper food hygiene.</p>
	<p>Objectives p. 57</p>

<p>Class: Fifth & Sixth Classes Strand: Myself Strand unit: Taking care of my body: Food and Nutrition</p>	<p>Appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy. Realise and accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet Exploring and examining the food pyramid Recognise some of the important nutrients that are necessary in a balanced diet and the food products in which they are found Macro-nutrients: protein, carbohydrate, fat micro-nutrients: vitamins and minerals Explore the factors that influence food choices Cost, advertising, demand, peer pressure, advertising and packaging, value for money, time for shopping and for cooking, ideal body images Explore and examine some of the illnesses particularly associated with food intake or special health conditions coeliac, diabetic, anorexia, bulimia, the dietary needs of different age groups and individuals Become aware of the importance of hygiene and care in the preparation and use of food Using before sell-by date, reading contents, not chopping cooked foods and uncooked foods on the same board</p>
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Appendix II

Dear parent/guardian,

Following advice from the Health Service Executive and in order to help the school maintain and promote our **Healthy Eating Policy**, we ask that you support us by sending in food included on the healthy eating list. If you would like to read the full Healthy Eating Policy or discuss any concerns please contact the class teacher.

Thank you,

Appendix III

Foods and drinks that should appear in a healthy lunch

- Water or water with a dash of cordial
- Sandwiches or rolls (lean meat, tuna, cheese, salad items)
- Yogurts
- Pitta bread, wraps, crackers, brown or soda bread
- Fresh or dried fruit what is peeled and cut up for smaller children (apples, bananas, oranges, cherry tomatoes, dried banana, dried apricots, raisins etc.)
- Vegetables, washed and chopped (carrots, lettuce, broccoli florets)
- Hard-boiled eggs, falafel, pasta, salads, vegetable dips, chunks of cheese
- Home-made, sugar-free snacks (

Foods that should be avoided in a healthy lunch

- Fizzy drinks, juices, Capri-sun
- Flavoured milks
- **All nuts and nut-based products**
- **Allergens: sometimes there will be a ban in place with certain foods depending on the needs of children in the school at that time. Parents will be informed of this.**
- Jams or marmalade
- Breakfast cereals (Cheerios, Sugarpuffs, Frosties etc.)
- Chocolate, in any form (rice cakes, yogurts, raisins, Nutella)
- Foods rich in sugar (cereal bars, cakes, buns, pastries, doughnuts, biscuits, sweets, lollipops, jellies etc.)
- Foods rich in fat (croissants, chicken nuggets, burgers, pizza, take-away foods, crisps, salty snacks)
- Chewing gum and popcorn

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/heal-docs/food-pyramid-leaflet.pdf>