

St. Peter's N.S. Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale

The SPHE Primary School Curriculum Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects. St. Peter's N.S. is committed to facilitating the development of pupils' skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and students as part of the school process to help integrate healthy eating into school life.

Reference documents

a) *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023* (Department of Education)

b) <https://www.iehg.ie/healthy-ireland>

c) Circular 13/2016 (Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Primary Schools) supports the school's work in this area: 'Regulating food intake is not the job of schools. However, schools are well placed to support pupils to develop an understanding of the nourishment of common and easily accessible food products and facilitate the development of the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their food intake.'

Policy Development

This policy is being developed in collaboration between staff, pupils and parents:

- Surveys were used to consult staff and pupils.
- Staff, pupils, parents and members of the Board of Management will offer feedback ahead of the ratification of this policy.

Aims and Objectives:

Our aim is to help all those in our school community to develop positive attitudes and habits in relation to healthy eating and healthy living. We aim to establish good nutritional practices based on a healthy balanced diet. The focus will be on positive reinforcement as a way of encouraging healthier lunches.

Our main objectives include:

- learn about nutrition, healthy eating and healthy living
- understand how good nutrition helps us grow, develop and stay healthy
- develop the skills and confidence to make healthy choices

- develop an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet based on the food pyramid
- develop an awareness of the importance of drinking water for hydration

Guidelines

S.P.H.E. (The Social, Personal and Health Education) is part of the primary school curriculum. It provides opportunities to foster the personal development, health and well-being of the individual pupils. Under the Strand "Myself", there is a particular focus on:

- Health and Well-being
- Knowing about my body
- Food and nutrition
- Making choices

The Food Pyramid is an education tool used nationally and internationally to communicate the healthy eating message. It will be used to teach children about the different food groups and the nutrients in each group.

Healthy Ireland is the national framework developed by the Irish Government for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. The key messages from this national framework are:

- Eat more vegetables, salad and fruit - Up to seven servings a day
- Limit intake of high fat, sugar, salt (HFSS) food and drinks
- Size matters- Use the food pyramid as a guide for serving sizes
- Increase your physical activity levels
- Small changes can make a big difference

We aim to reduce the amount of waste we produce. We encourage parents to reduce the amount of packaging in lunchboxes. Every pupil is encouraged to bring home their lunch litter to maintain a clean and healthy school environment.

Helpful Websites:

The following websites contain guidelines, resources and practical support for individuals and families to make healthier food choices. They include the food pyramid, daily meal plans, guidelines on portion sizes and fact sheets.

- <http://www.healthvireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/>

- <http://hse.ie/eng/about/Who/healthwellbeing/Our-PriorityProgrammes/HEAL/Healthy-Eating-Guidelines/>
- www.safefood.eu/Healthy-lunchboxes

What should be in a healthy lunch box?

A piece of food from the lowest 4 levels of the food pyramid

Food Pyramid Level	Some suggestions
Fruit and vegetables	Small apple, banana, mandarin orange, pear, berries, grapes, carrot sticks, cucumber, sliced pepper, fruit salad, tomato etc.
A portion of starchy food	Wholemeal bread, wholegrain bap, bagel, wrap, pitta pocket, rice, pasta, crackers, oatcakes, plain rice cakes
A portion of dairy food	Piece of cheese, natural or very low sugar yogurt
A portion of lean meat, fish or alternative	Chicken, turkey, ham, tuna, egg, hummus
A drink	We recommend water

- Cans and glass bottles are **not** permitted
- Healthy fillings for sandwiches are encouraged.
- Keep the food manageable. Peel and cut fruit.

The following are **not permitted:**

- Chewing gum
- Crisps
- Fizzy drinks
- Milk – due to lack of refrigeration space
- Snacks high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives e.g. sweets and chocolate

Some healthy snack suggestions:

- Fruit
- Plain rice cakes
- Plain breadsticks

- Unsalted plain or whole wheat crackers
- Vegetable sticks, slices
- Sugar free jelly pot

Please note:

Due to a number of children in the school who are at risk of anaphylaxis, we ask parents' co-operation in making the school a nut-free zone.

Please avoid the following lunch items:

- Peanut butter or other nut butter sandwiches
- Chocolate spreads containing nuts e.g. Nutella

In addition, we ask children NOT to share lunches.

Treats:

All children are encouraged to adhere to our healthy eating policy from Monday to Thursday. Any child who brings sweets or sweet treats to school on these days will be requested to keep them in their bag and bring them back home.

On Fridays, parents may allow their child to bring **one small treat** to school, along with their usual healthy lunch. This sweet treat could be a minisize bar, a bun or two biscuits. It could also be a special fruit, smoothie or homemade treat. **Given the number of children who have food allergies and intolerances, parents are respectfully asked not to send in treats for the class, regardless of the occasion.** Treats may also be permitted on special occasions such as the last day of term, on school tours etc. Chewing gum is not allowed in school or on school related activities, at any time.

Promotion and Implementation of the Policy

We will collaborate with staff, students and parents to ensure the successful implementation of the Healthy Eating policy. This will be done through the following measures:

- Copies of the Healthy Eating Policy will be provided to the whole school community via the school website.
- Reference will be made to the policy in the information booklet for parents of infant children.

- Teachers will review the contents of the policy at the start of the new school year.
- Teachers will reinforce the guidelines of the policy at regular intervals.
- Copies of the food pyramid will be displayed in classrooms and in the staff room
- Integration, where appropriate, with other areas of the curriculum such as History, Science, SPHE, Geography, Art, English, Gaeilge and PE is encouraged.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The effective implementation of this policy will be monitored by the staff. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out informally throughout the year to measure the progress, effectiveness and any constraints of the desired outcomes of the policy. The focus will be on **positive reinforcement** as a way of encouraging healthier lunches.

We will use the following success criteria to monitor and evaluate our work on healthy eating:

- Greater proportion of healthy food in lunchboxes.
- Reduction in the amount of high fat, high sugar and high salt food being consumed during the school day.
- Greater understanding and awareness by students of the need to eat a nutritious and balanced diet.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/10/22

Signed: Barry O'Flynn
Fr Barry O'Flynn (Chairperson)

Duncan McCarthy
Duncan McCarthy (Principal)

