



St Mary's Boys' NS
Belturbet
18127A



Healthy Eating Policy:

Introductory Statement

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at St. Mary's Boys' N.S. 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 (Type 2). A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life). It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure that children have a healthy lunch at school daily. To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we revised our healthy eating policy and this new policy will come into effect in October, 2023.

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 pupils to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. To enable pupils to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
3. Healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products are foods to be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet and to maintain concentration and focus throughout the school day.

Guidelines for a Healthy School Lunch

This policy provides guidelines and recommendations in accordance with the most recent food pyramid so that informed choices are made when deciding which foods to include when making balanced, nutritional lunches for children.

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. However, we cannot stress enough the importance of the children getting a good breakfast each morning before they come to school. All classes get 10 minutes of their 30 minutes lunch break (12.30-12.40) to eat their lunch before they enter the yard. This is in line with the Department of Education's time allocation for recreation in the Primary School Day.

Children will not share lunches in school.

Children are asked to bring a healthy lunch and drink to school each day in accordance with the school's Healthy Eating Policy. We emphasise a positive attitude towards healthy eating, conscious of the fact that good habits are formed early in a child's life.

Some healthy drink and snack suggestions we encourage are provided on the link below:

[Healthy school lunch ideas | safefood](https://www.safefood.net/family-health/healthy-lunch?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5YXYsNH68wIVGLLtCh3cbAtxEAAAYASAAEgKMrvD_BwE)

https://www.safefood.net/family-health/healthy-lunch?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI5YXYsNH68wIVGLLtCh3cbAtxEAAAYASAAEgKMrvD_BwE

The following food items are not permitted in children's lunches in St. Mary's Boys' N.S.:

- Sweets
- Crisps
- Fizzy Drinks
- Biscuits (all varieties)
- Chocolate and all products containing chocolate such as spreads, yoghurts and bars.
- Cakes, buns and any other sweet baking items
- Cereal bars (due to high sugar content)
- Nuts (see note on allergies)

NB. Allergies: Due to a number of allergies to nuts in the school all nuts and related products are prohibited on the school premises. This includes spreads that contain nuts such as peanut butter.

If your child has a particular feeding routine, special dietary requirements or food allergies, you must bring this to the attention of the school and your child's teacher as a matter of urgency.

Treat Days:

Sweet treats are only allowed to be brought in on special occasions at the discretion of the class teacher or principal. Other rewards such as stickers, no homework, baking, movies, games etc. are encouraged as a more appropriate reward system. While sweet treats are permitted on some occasions or outings, healthy choices are always encouraged. Birthday treats such as cakes, sweets and other items should be kept for celebrations outside of school.

Education:

In conjunction with the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum, children in St. Mary's Boys' N.S. will receive lessons on Healthy Eating throughout each school year. This will serve as a reminder of school policy, the food pyramid, food labelling, sugar, salt and fat facts, portion size, making lunch ideas etc. so that they are informed of the components of a healthy, balanced diet. It will also include some activities to involve children in active learning in relation to what they are

eating e.g. What's in your cereal or other food items and also some media and advertising education in relation to food.

Other initiatives that support this policy:

Green Schools: To decrease packaging and litter we recommend bringing a lunch box for food and a screw top bottle for drinks.

School Garden: By becoming involved in actively planting foods such as vegetables, fruit or herbs children develop an understanding and curiosity about foods that will hopefully become part of their diet for life.

Other: From time to time some of the following may be included as part of our education in this area, for example, The Food Dudes Programme, Healthy Eating Day/Week, Fruit days, displays and possible visits from a dentist, doctor, nurse or dietician in the community to speak to the children.

Roles and responsibilities:

- Pupils: Pupils are made aware of and must adhere to recommendations outlined in this policy.
- Parents: Parents will make informed decisions when making choices for school lunches by referring to the policy and communicating decisions to their children. Parents pack an appropriate amount of food for their child- enough for one small snack and lunch.
- Teachers: Teachers will educate pupils on the components of a healthy diet so that they see the importance of having a healthy lunch policy that meets the needs of all pupils in our school. They will also encourage and monitor the class to ensure all aspects of policy are implemented and upheld. They will allow adequate time for children to eat their lunch and praise healthy choices.
- Community: It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to uphold and encourage healthy choices for children at school.
- Promotion: This policy will be promoted through its availability to parents, teachers and community on our school website. Information leaflets with lunch ideas will be given to each family. It will also be promoted through positive communication to pupils from parents and teachers.

Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2023. It will be reviewed as deemed necessary.

Signed: 

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 03/10/23

Signed: 

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 03/10/23