



## Healthy Lunch Policy

### Introductory Statement

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, we encourage the children in our care to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. Lunch is an important meal for school going children. There is a strong connection between improved diets, performance, brain power and good food habits developed during the early years will stay with your child for life. Therefore, we ask parents/guardians to be good role models for their children and encourage healthy eating at home and at school.

All uneaten lunches and waste/wrappings will go home in lunch boxes so that parents/guardians can see what your child has/hasn't eaten in school.

### Aims and Objectives

This policy has a number of aims:-to promote the personal development and well-being of the child

1. to promote a whole school approach to healthy eating and nutrition
2. to promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects
3. to enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
4. to enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet

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). However, the school day is quite short and time allotted to lunch is limited, so the children do not require a large lunch. In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play. We recommend children bring in one sugar free juice and one small bottle of water. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a bottle of water.

As the incidence of childhood obesity, diabetes and childhood allergies (asthma, nut allergy etc.) are all on the increase, it is important that we limit the amount of "goodies" given as treats. In light of this, we encourage our children to eat healthy lunches every day.

Only on a Friday should children bring in **one small treat** e.g. a fun-size bar or a biscuit. Please do not send in treats (cakes/sweets etc) for class distribution on your child's birthday or other special occasion as many other children have food allergies – remember not everyone can enjoy these treats and they can become upset. There will be occasions throughout the year (e.g. Halloween and Easter hunts), where the school/class teacher or student teacher will provide whole class treats for

pupils. External personnel working or visiting the school (e.g. PA, lollipop lady, sports coaches, etc) are not permitted to provide treats for the children.

### ***Practical Lunch Suggestions:***

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children;

- Lunch boxes should be easy for the child to open
- Sandwiches should be cut up small
- Fruit such as oranges and apples should be peeled and segmented
- Drink cartons, bottles and beakers should be easy for the child to open
- The traditional lunch consisting of a sandwich, fruit and a drink, is nutritional and far kinder on your child's teeth
- In addition to their lunchtime drink, we recommend that children bring a small bottle of water (sports caps only) to sip during the day if they get thirsty e.g. after P.E.

### ***The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children:***

- Sandwiches (one slice of bread or a small roll / Pitta bread or wrap) filled with ham, chicken, tuna, egg, cheese or salad
- Fruit such as a small segmented apple, a banana, peach, orange segments, chopped grapes (length-ways), chopped tomatoes, tinned or dried fruit e.g. raisins
- Drinks – milk/probiotic, fruit juices rather than fruit 'drinks' (low sugar) water
- Cream crackers/Tuc/Ryvita

### ***Foods Not Permitted:***

- Nuts due to allergies and choking risk, including peanut butter and hazelnut spread i.e. Nutella
- Crisps
- Fizzy/sugary drinks, Lucozade or energy drinks
- Hot drinks
- Sweets, jellies, muffins, or cakes, chocolate biscuits/bars etc. (except for a small treat on Friday)
- Yoghurts/Frubes/food pouches are not permitted in Junior Infants
  - Spillages of yoghurt are much more frequent in Junior Infants, and very young children get upset when they spill on their clothes
- Chewing gum

### **Ratification and Implementation**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed in 2025.

The Board of Management reserves the right to add to or amend this policy from time to time as is deemed necessary.



Mr Michael McKenna,  
Chairperson,  
Board of Management.