

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

Healthy Eating Policy

1. Introduction

This original policy was formulated by the staff and parents of St. Joseph's N.S, Leitrim Village in 2011 and reviewed in 2015, and again in December 2018. In October 2018 the Parents were consulted by means of a questionnaire. The feedback from this questionnaire is reflected in this policy. A print out of questionnaire responses will be kept on file in the school and a summary of responses is included in *Appendix C* at the end of this policy.

2. Rational

Healthy lunches are always encouraged in St. Joseph's N.S. The school participated in the Food Dudes programme in early 2011 and again some classes participated again in 2017.

As parents provide the lunches it was decided that parents should be consulted in the development of the policy. In addition to this, as primary educators of their children parental input was considered paramount in promoting healthy eating throughout the school and for life in general.

A total of 67 questionnaires were completed and returned to the school in October 2018. The results reflected that 95% of parents were happy with the current healthy eating policy, 91% were happy to continue with a small treat of Fridays and 95% were also happy to continue with treats on special occasions i.e. end of term.

It was also recommended that a whole school approach should be taken to integrate healthy eating into school life.

After much discussion on current school practice, it was agreed that all teachers should continue to take responsibility to encourage healthy lunches within their classroom. The staff also agreed that parents should have a major role in assisting in developing this policy.

3. Ethos

In St. Joseph's N.S. we aim to provide a well ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. The school adopts a holistic approach to the education and development of each child and to the enhancement of teaching and learning process.

Our school recognises the benefits of healthy eating. A healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting young people's health, ensuring they perform to their full potential, both physically and academically, and for their growth and development.

The aims and objectives of this Healthy Lunch Policy are to: -

- ❖ Encourage the nutritional and overall well-being of all children attending the school.
- ❖ Encourage healthier breaks and lunches.
- ❖ To support children in developing a life-long healthy eating practice.
- ❖ To foster positive attitude towards healthy eating in partnership with parents.
- ❖ To promote healthy eating and wellbeing initiatives such as guest speakers on nutrition and fitness, dentist etc., lessons on healthy eating etc

- ❖ To make staff aware of any children with specific food allergies such as in the case of nut allergies and children with special dietary needs i.e. diabetic children.
- ❖ To promote healthy eating habits by informing children about nutrition through a series of S. P.H.E lessons: food related theme of Taking Care of My Body: Food and nutrition; Making Choices. This will also be integrated into Science lessons.
- ❖ To help improve children's concentration, learning and energy levels.
- ❖ To continue to support the Green School policy in reducing waste: - children are encouraged to bring in lunches in a lunch box. Children are encouraged to bring home food wrappings and any uneaten food items, fruit peels and cores etc.
- ❖ Children are encouraged to bring in the same drinks container instead of a different drink carton every school day.
- ❖ Children are encouraged to bring home fruit peelings for composting or to have pre-cut fruit pieces in reusable containers.
- ❖ To raise awareness of the benefits of eating at least 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables a day.
- ❖ Food rich in calcium such as milk and cheese is also recommended for healthy teeth and bones.
- ❖ Senior Classes will become familiar with the food pyramid.
- ❖ To raise awareness of tooth decay as a result of eating food with high sugar contents a local dentist will visit the school in early 2019 to discuss dental hygiene coinciding with the implementation of healthy eating policy.

5. Content

This policy will be looked at under the following headings: -

1. Approach to developing the policy
2. Feedback from parents
3. Food Dudes Programme
4. Healthy Lunch Guidelines
5. Foods Recommended
6. Foods Discouraged
7. Foods never allowed
8. Conclusion
9. Treat Days/ Special occasions

5.1 Approach to the Development of St Joseph's Healthy Eating Policy

- Parent representatives designed a questionnaire informing all parents of recommended food choice and unsuitable food choices. (2011)
- Children's current eating habits were identified by teacher observation during break and lunch time.
- All parents were consulted to assist in devising policy. A questionnaire was issued to all parents (October 2018)
- Parents thoughts and ideas regarding healthy eating were gathered via the above questionnaire.
- Parents' feedback was taken into consideration when finalising this policy.

5.2 Parents' Feedback

A questionnaire was sent home with each child for his/ her parents' perusal (October 2018). The feedback was analysed by the Healthy Eating coordinator (a copy of this questionnaire & parents' responses have been kept on record in the principal's office).

The following was noted and taken into consideration: -

- Majority of parents were satisfied with the current policy.
- Majority of parents were satisfied to continue with a small treat on Fridays.
- Majority of parents were satisfied to continue with treats on special occasions e.g. end of term.
- Foods which parents recommended not to be allowed: - Jellies, popcorn, tayto, yogurt-too sugary, nuts, processed food, granola bars, high energy/protein bars, chocolate spreads, nut spreads, smelly food, chewing gum, chewy bars, crisps, smarties, white bread rolls.
- Drinks which parents recommended not to be allowed: - Fizzy drinks, juice diluted water, energy drinks, flavoured milks.
- Healthy lunchbox suggestions by parents: - Mini dinners e.g. pasta, cheese, cheese cubes, peppers, cucumbers, fruit/veg in season, veg and humus, Greek style yogurt, raisins, boiled eggs, cous cous, rice cakes, wraps, Happy Pear foods, scones.
- Others suggestions to promote healthy eating within the school: - Milk run, Food Dudes, more time for eating, more time to chat while eating to promote healthy attitude to food, try stop others critiquing another's lunch, switch to wholegrain, Healthy Eating Week/Day, visitor to school- dietitian/nutrition/dentist/sports star, more balls on yard, food not used as reward, extra PE for class with healthiest lunch in a week/month, lunch box checks, getting children involved in making lunch, older children heating food for younger children, praise, children design lunch menu, grow veg in school, have a fruit and veg break and 11:00, 'finish your water bottle by the end of the day', facility to refill water bottles. Install filter taps in each classroom.

The list of recommended foods and food to be discouraged as well as foods banned for the school has reviewed and updated based on the findings of the questionnaire. These lists are contained in sections **5.5**, **5.6** and **5.7** of this policy.

5.3 Food Dude Programme

St. Joseph's N.S participated in the *Food Dude* programme in early 2011 and also some classes also participated in 2017. This has helped to encourage a more positive attitude towards eating more fruit and vegetables. Since undertaking this programme, many children have continued to bring their own fruit and vegetables to school. A certain number of children bring in a handful of raw vegetables or fruit pieces maintaining the ethos of fruit and vegetable consumption in the longer term. The school may participate in it again if the opportunity arises.

5.4 Healthy Lunch Guidelines

A healthy lunch should contain: -

- Food which are rich in protein, vitamins and calcium.
- Food which contain no colouring or additives.
- Foods which are low in sugar and fat.
- 2/3 portions from fruit and vegetables

5.5 Food Recommended

- All fruits: cut in small pieces in junior classes if possible; fruit salad, apple chunks, whole bananas, Kiwis (pre-cut in half or sliced), pineapple pieces, grapes. (Some children may have allergies to cherry tomatoes/ Kiwi...).
- Vegetables: cucumber slices, carrot sticks, peppers, sweet corn.
- Bread/ rolls / scones/ wraps/ baps, whole grain scones etc preferably wholemeal.
- Home baked buns, muffins and scones
- Crackers, low in salt.
- Plain rice cakes.
- Oat cakes.
- Cheese (unprocessed), Cheese cubes.

- Mini dinners e.g. pasta, boiled eggs, cous cous, Happy Pear foods
- Veg and humus.
- Greek style yogurt,
- Sandwich fillings: turkey, ham, tuna, chicken, roast beef, low sugar jam, egg & onion or vegetarian such as salad and sweet corn.
- Drinks: Water or milk, low sugar diluted fruit drinks. Re-usable drink containers/ bottles are encouraged to reduce waste in the school.

Certain foods required to maintain sugar levels in the case of any child suffering from diabetes, or other medical conditions will be considered acceptable upon parent's request and class teacher's discretion.

5.6 Foods Discouraged

The following food items are discouraged, and may only be brought to school, in a limited quantity, for special occasions and on treat days such as Fridays.

- All chocolate products.
- Pastries, biscuits, cookies, buns, cakes, doughnuts, biscuits and cookies.
- Fruit winders.
- Sausage rolls, wedges, breakfast rolls & all other hot food from garage deli.
- Crisps.
- Some cereal and fruit bars which are deemed high in sugar contents.
- Natural or sugar free jellies

5.7 Foods never allowed

The following food items are never allowed in school: -

- Chewing gum
- Nuts
- Sandwich fillers such as peanut butter, hazelnut or chocolate spread. Including Nutella
- Fizzy drinks

5.8 Conclusion

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).

With parental involvement, we hope as a staff to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start of junior infants to sixth class.

Children are encouraged to bring a lunch box to school to reduce the waste generated in the school. Children eat their lunches in the classroom before going to the yard. Children are not allowed to swap their lunch with other children. Any unfinished items may be brought to the yard and children are encouraged to put any waste in the bins. Unfinished lunches are taken home. This allows parents to see exactly what lunch had been eaten and provides an opportunity for parents to discuss this matter with their child/ children.

5.9 Treat Days/ Special Occasions

Feedback from the 2018 questionnaire revealed that 91% of parents were in agreement that treats will continue to be allowed on Fridays and on special occasions such as the day of the holidays or school celebration e.g. teacher retirement, school tours/ trips etc. Parents will be given advance notice of upcoming special occasions.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Every parent / guardian is responsible for providing his/ her child/ children with a health lunch, in line with this policy. Each class teacher will co-ordinate the progress of this policy and can encourage the children to bring healthy lunches but ultimately the responsibility for eating healthily lies with the Parent /Guardian of each child.

7. Implementation and Review

While many aspects of this policy are the current practice in the school, this policy will be implemented in full once it had been formally ratified by the Board of Management of the school. It is hoped that the Board of Management will ratify this policy in early 2019 with immediate effect.

The policy will continue to be reviewed every two years, or sooner should the need arise, in consultation with the staff, parents, healthy eating coordinator and Board of Management of the school.

8. Ratification and Communication

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S., in early 2019 for discussion, with a view to ratification. Once ratified, every teacher will be given a copy of this policy electronically. A copy will be uploaded to the school website, www.leitrim-ns.ie, where parents of children enrolled in the school can access it. Parents will be informed about the new policy via a communication letter. This policy will be included in the school Information Booklet for parents of new pupils.

Appendix A
Healthy Lunch Reminders

Please detach this page and keep safe

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- Bread/ rolls / scones/ wraps/ baps, whole grain scones etc preferably wholemeal.
- Home baked buns, muffins and scones
- Crackers, low in salt.
- Plain rice cakes.
- Oat cakes.
- Cheese (unprocessed), cheese cubes.
- Mini dinners e.g. pasta, boiled eggs, cous cous, Happy Pear foods
- Veg and humus.
- Greek style yogurt,
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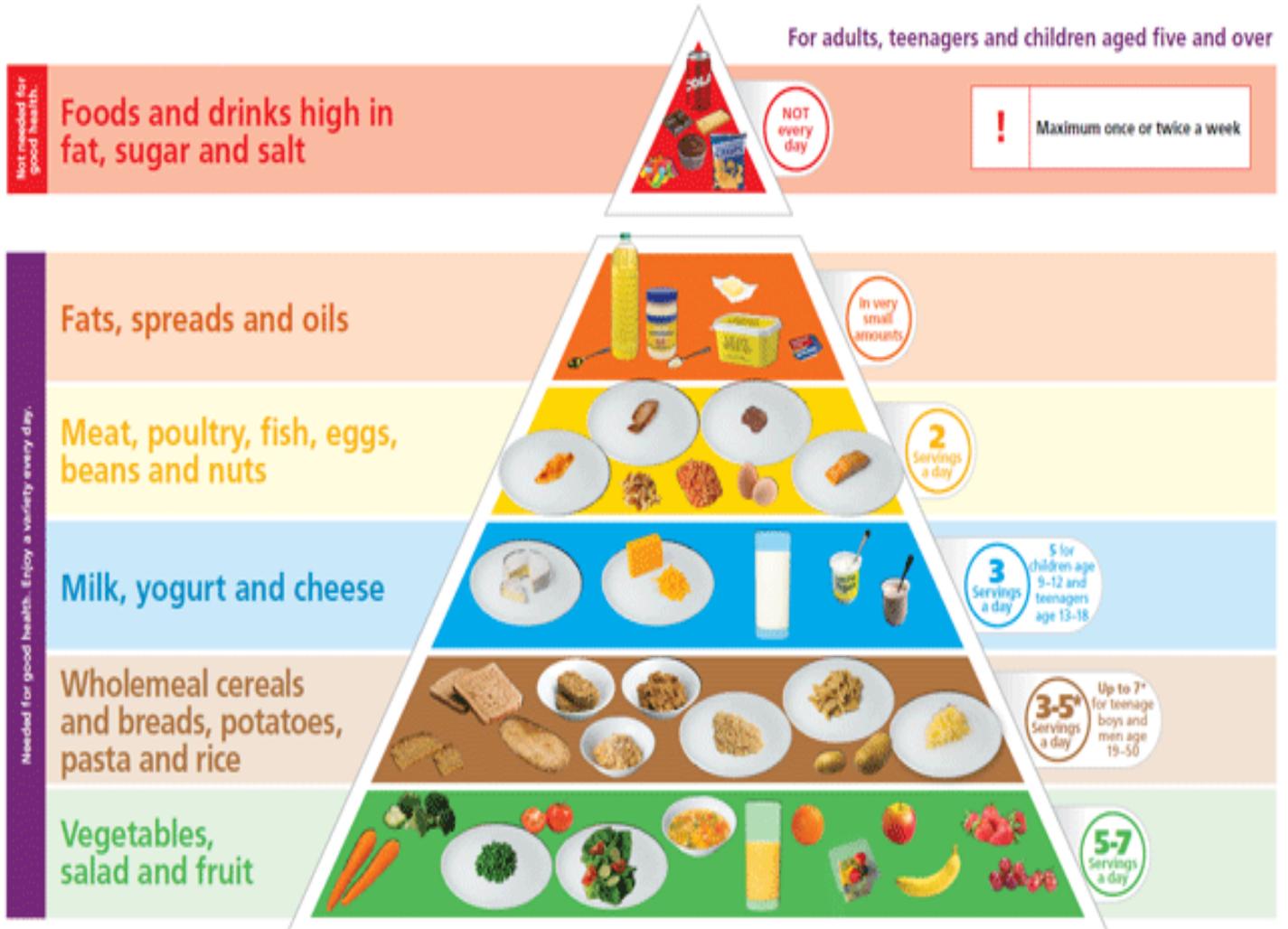
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Appendix B

The Food Pyramid



Appendix C

Healthy Eating Policy –Questionnaire and Compilation of Results October 2018.



HEALTHY EATING

Are you happy with the current healthy eating policy?	Yes 64	No -3
Should a small treat on Fridays be continued?	Yes -61	No- 6
Should treats on special occasions e.g. end of term, be continued?	Yes - 64	No-3

What foods do you believe should not be allowed in school?

Jellies, popcorn, tayto, yogurt-too sugary, nuts, processed food, granola bars, high energy/protein bars, chocolate spreads, nut spreads, smelly food, chewing gum, chewy bars, crisps, smarties, white bread rolls.

What drinks do you believe should not be allowed in school?

Fizzy drinks, juice diluted water, energy drinks, flavoured milks.

Have you any healthy lunchbox suggestions?

Mini dinners e.g. pasta, cheese, cheese cubes, peppers, cucumbers, fruit/veg in season, veg and humus, greek style yogurt, raisons, boiled eggs, cous cous, rice cakes, wraps, Happy Pear foods, scones.

Have you any other suggestions to promote healthy eating within the school?

Milk run, Food Dudes, more time for eating, more time to chat while eating to promote healthy attitude to food, try stop others critiquing another's lunch, switch to wholegrain, Healthy Eating Week/Day, visitor to school-dietitian/nutrition/dentist/sports star, more balls on yard, food not used as reward, extra PE for class with healthiest lunch in a week/month, lunch box checks, getting children involved in making lunch, older children heating food for younger children, praise, children design lunch menu, grow veg in school, have a fruit and veg break and 11:00, 'finish your water bottle by the end of the day', facility to refill water bottles. Install filter taps in each classroom.