Healthy Eating Policy

Scoil An Linbh Iosa, Ballycane, Naas, Co.Kildare

Introduction:

The plan was formulated by Ms. Carol Molumby in conjunction with the Principal, Deputy Principal, staff and Board of Management of Scoil an Linbh Íosa.

Mission Statement:

- Scoil An Linbh, Iosa, through these guidelines, aims to help all involved in our school community (children, staff and parents), to develop positive attitudes to healthy eating and living. We wish to promote 'the personal development and well being of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. (SPHE Guidelines)
- Research suggests that good nutrition is linked to better behaviour and academic performance. We need to ensure that our policy supports this and is taken seriously by all members of our school community in order for change to happen.
- Non-food rewards and physical activity rewards may reap multiple benefits and contribute to overall health.

Aims:

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of the child and all members of our school community.
- To promote the overall health of the child and provide the foundations for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To provide supportive attitudes to healthy lifestyles.
- To promote parents in their role as Primary Educators of their children by providing them with up to date information on healthy eating habits from the Dept. of Health.

Objectives

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
- To enable the child to recognise that there are other elements also involved in a healthy lifestyle, such as physical activity, adequate sleep, reduced screen time and so on and to accept personal responsibilities for these aspects of healthy living also.

Guidelines:

- In 2016, the Healthy Eating Guidelines for Ireland were updated. The new food pyramid now includes fruits and vegetables on the bottom shelf and cereals on the shelf above. The new food Pyramid can be accessed online at:

  https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/healthy-eating-guidelines/

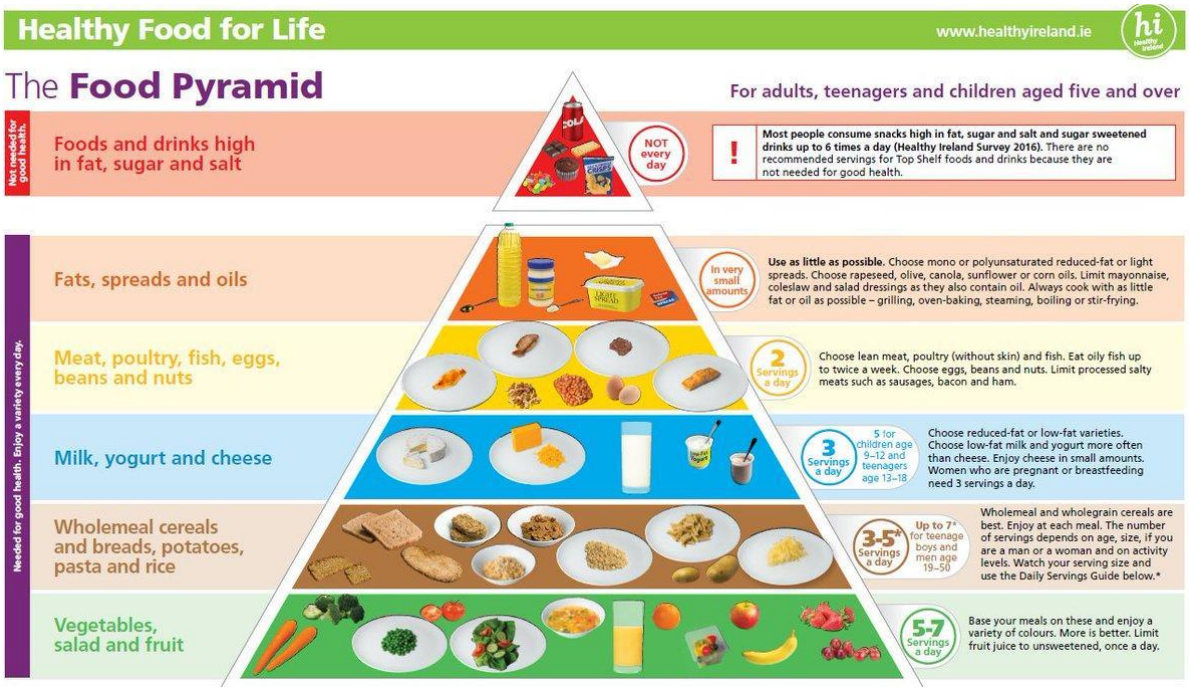
  The HSE have stated:
  "***Dietary factors are the most important risk factors undermining health and wellbeing in every single country in the World Health Organisation European Region. Research shows that excess consumption of foods high in fats, salt and sugar, as well as low levels of vegetables and fruit intake, play a significant role in increasing our risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer"***

The **Healthy Food for Life** resources are for the entire population over the age of five and they define the Irish Government recommendations on healthy eating and a balanced diet. They provide a consistent and evidence-based approach for healthy eating advice.

The key messages from **Healthy Food for Life** 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. Start TODAY!

Here is a copy of the updated Food Pyramid. (updated 2016):



Scoil An Linbh Iosa aims to follow the most up-to-date guidelines and resources available regarding healthy eating.

With this in mind, here are some ideas for a healthy lunchbox:

Fruit and Vegetable Break:	**Lunch:**
• All fruits and vegetables that the children might try. • Seasonal fruit and veg • Ideas for veg: chopped carrot sticks, broccoli florets (blanched or raw), cherry tomatoes,cucumber slices, sugar snap peas, sweetcorn, peas, sliced peppers, celery sticks, turnip pieces (and many more) • Ideas for fruit: fruit salad, melon pieces, strawberries, grapes sliced in half, apple, mandarins, oranges, pear, bananas, pineapple etc	• Sandwiches made ideally with wholemeal bread. • Whole meal pasta with pesto. • Oat cakes with spread of some kind • Crispbreads • Water biscuits • Humous • Olives • Cheese • Salad pot • Scones • Home-made flapjacks • Ricecakes • Meat slices

● Cereal bars with pictures of fruit are not allowed and are not a substitute for real fruit.	● Popcorn ● Pitta bread ● Wholemeal bagels ● Seeds ● Chickpeas
Small Break: ● Crackers, oatcakes, ryvita slices, fruit and veg, cheese pieces, slices of meat. Popcorn, seeds	**Drinks:** ● Ideally water. Children should be encouraged from day 1 of school to bring water only and they will get used to this as being their only drink.

NOTES:

1) **NUTS: Due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils, we ask you to be vigilant in the following**:

- Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
- Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads containing nuts such as Nutella, nut based breads and cereal/health bars containing nuts or labelled "may contain nut traces" in school lunches.
- Ask children not to share their lunches.
- If your child has eaten peanuts/nuts before coming to school, please be sure your child's hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering the school.

To counteract this, we encourage parents to provide opportunities for their children to eat different types of nuts at home and outside of school, as they are a very healthy option.

2) **MILK PRODUCTS:**

Milk products have been up for debate many times, and although we encourage children to get their adequate dairy intake of 2-3 servings a day, we have found that milk products have been very difficult to monitor in the classroom and any spills cause long term damage to school materials (carpet for example) and leave a lingering odour. Cheese and hard milk products are easier to manage in the classroom environment, and so we ask parents not to send in yoghurt drinks, yoghurts or milk drinks of any kind.

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. Parents need to be aware of this and allow the children to have more milk products at home.

3) **There is no "treat day".**

4) Occasionally, on a holiday, the teacher may tell the children that they can bring in a small treat on that occasion. Children should be encouraged to bring in 1 small treat and teacher should give examples of what a small treat would look like. (mini bar for example). This would usually only happen at Halloween, Easter and Christmas.

List of foods to avoid in lunchboxes:

As a general rule of thumb, snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives should not be in the children's lunchboxes.

- Cereal bars, unless home-made
- Anything with chocolate on it or in it
- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Sugary drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, fruit juices, etc)
- Nut products including Nutella
- Biscuits/bars
- Chewing gum
- Fruit winders
- Lollipops
- Sweets of any kind, even sugar free.
- Yoghurts (in Junior Infants - 2nd classes)
- Yoghurt drinks

If such foods are brought to school, children will be asked to bring them home in their lunchboxes. These foods will be marked with a sticker so parents are aware they are not permitted.

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will from time to time, reward children who can show a piece of fruit or veg., other healthy foods in their lunchboxes. The children will be rewarded with a non-food treat. Regular spot checks should take place, not to embarrass children but to encourage them to want to bring in good food choices.

Green Flag School

Our green school motto is: 'GET GREEN, KEEP GREEN, MAKE IT INTO A REGULAR ROUTINE!'

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons

put only fruit peel into the compost bins

not to bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons N.B.

NB: Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.

Initiatives:

- Our school has been involved over the years with **Food Dudes**. Food Dudes in Ireland is a Healthy Eating Programme for Kids. Food Dudes is a programme developed by the University of Wales, Bangor, to encourage children to eat more **fruit and vegetables** both in school and at home. It is based on positive role models (the Food Dudes characters), repeated tasting and rewards.

Review and Ratification:

This policy was formulated by the ***Staff of Scoil an Linbh Íosa*** and approved by the Board of Management in June 2019. It will be reviewed in accordance with any new updated HSE/WHO guidelines as required.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

CHAIRPERSON:_____DATE:_____