



# MAHOONAGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

## Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at Mahoonagh National School 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. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we introduced a healthy eating policy starting from June 2016. We are now updating this policy.

### **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 the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. 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).

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

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

### **Bread & Alternatives**

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal  
Rice – wholegrain  
Pasta – wholegrain  
Potato Salad  
Wholemeal Scones  
Bread sticks  
Crackers  
Pitta bread

### **Savouries**

Lean Meat  
Chicken/Turkey  
Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines  
Cheese  
Quiche  
Pizza

## **Fruit & Vegetables**

Apples, Banana, Peach  
Mandarins, Orange segments,  
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,  
Plum, Pineapple cubes  
Grapes,  
Cucumber, Sweetcorn  
Tomato,  
Coleslaw.

## **Drinks**

Milk  
Water  
Squashes, i.e. low sugar  
Yoghurt

### **A word about Milk**

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. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage him to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

### **We ask that children do not bring the following to school:**

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives, including the following:

- **Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)**
- **Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices, etc)**
- **Sweets**
- **Chocolate biscuits/bars**
- **Cereal bars**
- **Chewing gum**
- **Fruit winders**
- **Popcorn.**
- **All types of nuts are not allowed including products containing nuts i.e. peanut butter, fruit and nut bars, Nutella.**

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 other healthy foods in their lunchboxes.

Please note Fizzy drinks are not allowed. Capri Sun is not allowed as the cartons cannot be recycled.

Given the current high intake of fats in school going children's diets fast foods e.g. chips, battered sausages, wedges and pizza slices are not allowed.

Please note that sweet bars, chocolate bars, sweet biscuits and confectionary are not allowed Monday to Thursday. Only 1 choice as a treat on Friday!

### **A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:**

Fats Sugar Sweets etc.	Sparingly
Meat, Fish Peas/Beans	2 portions per day
Milk, Cheese Yoghurt	3+ portions per day
Fruit & Vegetables	4+ portions per day
Bread, Cereals & Potatoes	6+ portions per day

**Treat Day**

Friday will be our treat day. On this day, children can include one food item from the 'not allowed' list. Please note: popcorn is only allowed on Fridays.

**Green Flag School**

We are very proud of the 4 green flags we have achieved to date 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 bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.
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**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management & Parents' Council on 17/09/2020.

It will be reviewed in the school year 2023/2024

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM