



Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at St Joseph's National School we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

Aims:

- ✓ To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- ✓ To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- ✓ To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- ✓ To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons, etc.
- ✓ To reinforce Science, P.E. and S.P.H.E. lessons.

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.

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 introduced a healthy eating policy. 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. Breakfast/ lunch 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. Children are encouraged not to share lunches in school.

St Joseph's NS is a "Nut Product Free Zone" due to allergies in the school.

Bread & Alternatives	Savouries
Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal	Lean Meat
Rice – wholegrain	Chicken/Turkey
Pasta – wholegrain	Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines
Potato Salad	Cheese
Wholemeal Scones	Vegetarian Sausage
Bread sticks	Beans
Crackers	Chickpeas
Pitta bread	
Wraps	
Rice cakes	
Fruit & Vegetables	Drinks
Fruit & Berries	Water
Seedless grapes cut	
Cucumber, Sweetcorn	
Tomato, Coleslaw.	
Seeds (Sunflower, pumpkin, sesame etc.)	

Drinking Plenty of Water

Water is essential for life. Through perspiration (sweating), the body uses water to lower body temperature when it is warm. Regular drinks are necessary to replace fluid lost during the day. Without enough water or fluid in the short-term, the dehydration that results causes tiredness. Water is a tooth friendly drink. The more active a person is, the more fluid is needed to replace fluid lost as sweat. In hot weather, or if playing sports, children should bring extra water to school.

Packing the Lunch Box

Children's portion sizes have gotten bigger over the last 20-30 years. Children should be able to eat their lunches in a reasonable amount of time.

St. Joseph's NS operate a 'grab and go' system at one break where the children take something from their lunch box and bring it to eat outside on the yard. At the other break, the children have 15 minutes to eat their lunch before their outside play.

Children should be able to *unwrap and eat any lunches sent in from home by themselves*. Please help by not giving products that they cannot open themselves e.g., foods with wrappers, unpeeled oranges etc.

To save time, please ensure all food is well prepared (e.g., fruit peeled and chopped if necessary and sandwiches cut). Parents must ensure that lunch boxes contain whatever utensils are required.

Hot school meals will be provided in accordance with the Department of Social Protection and Department of Education and Youth guidelines.

As we are trying to reduce the amount of waste in the school, parents are encouraged to reduce the amount of packaging in their child's lunch box. *All wrappers and uneaten lunches sent in from home will be sent home in your child's lunch box.*

We ask that the following are NOT brought into school:

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

- ✗ Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- ✗ Sugary drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, fruit juices, etc)
- ✗ Nut products including Nutella
- ✗ Sweets
- ✗ Biscuits/ Cereal or Granola bars
- ✗ Chewing gum
- ✗ Fruit winders
- ✗ Popcorn (unless plain / unflavoured)
- ✗ Chocolate covered rice cakes
- ✗ Lollipops

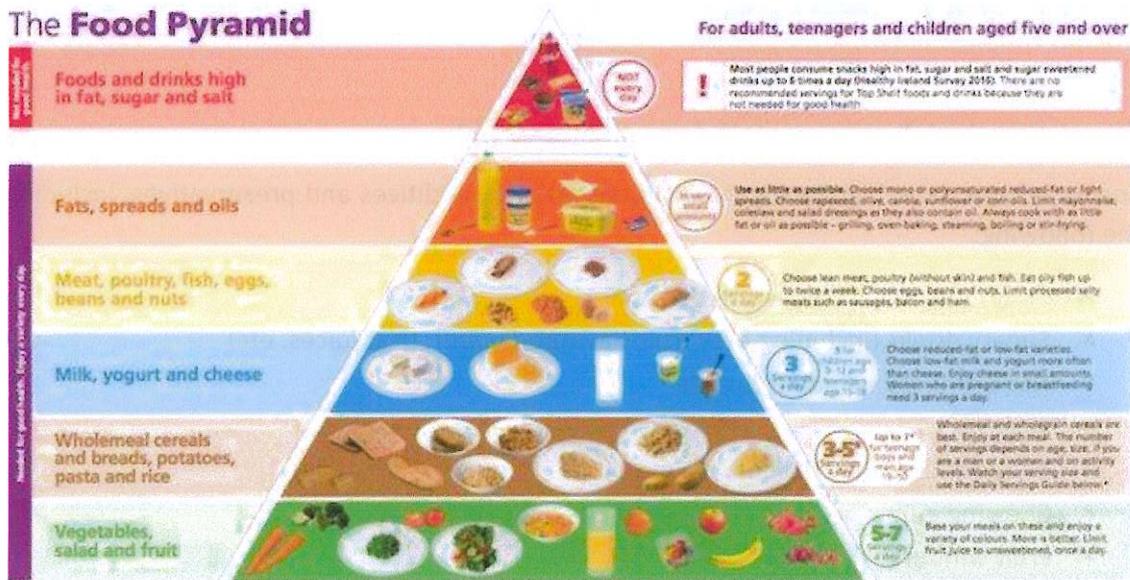
If such foods are brought to school, children will be asked to bring them home in their lunchboxes and no further sanction will be imposed.

Exceptions to the above lists:

- Lunch Pass (1 nut free treat may be included with their normal lunch. Sharing sized packs are not permitted).
- Class treat (max once a half term)
- School trips
- Special Health Considerations/conditions

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

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



We encourage your support in implementing this Policy and realise that the success of a Healthy Lunch Policy will depend totally on the willingness of parents to support it.

Generally, the children will abide by our Healthy Lunch policy especially when they see the health benefits.

Together we can have a happier and healthier school population if we work together for the benefit of your child.

Review

Roles and Responsibilities

The principal and leadership team have primary responsibility for the review of this policy.

Timeframe:

The review will take place as necessary

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S. on 5/02/26.

Signed Chairperson BOM: *[Signature]*

Signed School Principal: *Ms O'Reilly*