



Healthy Eating Policy

This policy is an update of an existing policy put in place four years ago in consultation with the school community.

This policy has been reviewed in consultation with staff, parents, student council and pupils. A draft policy was formulated by a sub-committee of parents and principal. A final draft was approved by the PTA, staff and BOM.

Rationale:

Ireland is facing major problems with obesity, type 2 Diabetes and general health and fitness in children. METNS supports the education of children around healthy food. METNS also wants to support parents in their efforts to keep their children healthy by providing accessible information through the lunch box Ideas Exchange on the website. By having some uniformity in the types of food brought into school, we hope there would be less peer pressure to eat unhealthy food.

These guidelines also relate to the following curricular areas:

S.P.H.E.:

Strand: Myself:

Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition.

Strand Unit: Self Identity: Making Decisions.

Science:

Strand: Living Things:

Strand Unit: Myself: Human Life Processes.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

Our school cherishes all children equally and to aid them achieve their true potential, we endeavour to develop a positive attitude to eating healthy foods.

Aims:

- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet.
- To encourage the eating of nutritious food which will sustain the Children throughout the day.
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to the consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage pupils to be aware of litter problems caused by junk food, prepared food, juice cartons etc.



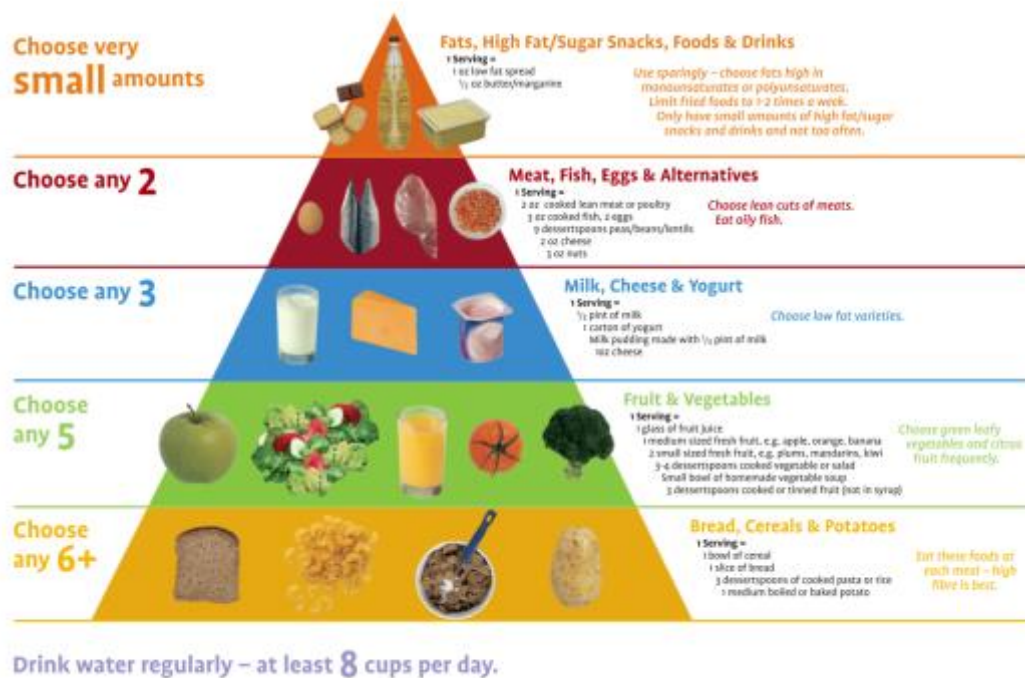
Guidelines:

1. In line with safe food guidelines the school is trying to avoid high sugar/ high additive foods therefore asks that parents do not include sweets, chocolate, chocolate biscuits, snack bars, fizzy drinks, crisps or potato snacks in lunches on any day of the week.
2. A healthy lunch includes a piece of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.
To be nutritionally beneficial lunch should include one food from each of the main food groups:
 - Cereal - bread (sandwiches), potatoes, crackers, scones, pitta, pasta, rice
 - Fruit and vegetables - apple, banana, pear, cucumber, carrot etc
 - Protein – meat, fish, cheese, tofu, pulses, meat substitutes
3. Drinks: “Safe Food” guidelines suggest that water is the best choice followed by milk. Juice is also permitted.
4. All pupils will be taught the Food and Nutrition lessons from the S.P.H.E. curriculum. As part of the SPHE programme at METNS the children will be encouraged to drink water and to keep hydrated.
5. School staff will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating and children will be praised and encouraged in their efforts to comply with guidelines.
6. All types of nuts and food containing nuts are completely prohibited in the school because of severe nut allergies suffered by a number of children.
7. No swapping of lunches will be permitted.



- The P.T.A. will be encouraged to bring in guest speakers to speak to parents on nutrition and healthy eating.
- The Department of Education stipulate the time given for break and lunch times. Small break is 10 min. Lunch break is 30 mins. The children are officially allocated no more time to eat, however it is good practice within our school to use time such as listening to music, stories etc. for eating.

Use the food pyramid to plan your healthy food choices everyday.



Exceptions:

Many parents like the tradition of a treat on Friday. An extensive list of healthy treat options is available on the Lunch Box Ideas Exchange. Some examples are: popcorn, exotic/treat fruits such as berries, mango, melon or home baked low-sugar flapjacks, buns or muffins



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Children will be allowed to bring in treats at end of term parties and on special nominated occasions.

Special dietary requirements of individual children will always be facilitated.

Implementation:

This policy will be implemented immediately after ratification by the Board of Management.

Lunchbox ideas/swapping will be available on our website and the following links can be used:

www.safefood.eu

www.nutritionexplorations.org/kids.php

www.facs.pppst.com/foodpyramid.html

Review:

The Healthy Eating Guidelines will be reviewed every 2 years or as necessary.

The following are involved in reviewing this policy:

Principal/Staff

Parents / Guardians/ PTA

Student Council/Pupils

Board of Management

Ratification and Communication:

The Board of Management will ratify the policy and each year the policy will be given to parents/ available on web site.

The guidelines will be communicated to pupils in a positive way.

The Student Council will be part of the communication process.

Ratified at Board of Management meeting, September 2011