

# **Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra**

## ***Healthy Eating Policy***

### **Introduction**

This policy has been devised by the staff of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra in consultation with the parents and pupils of the school. It supports the recommendations of the HSE (HSE, Healthy eating policy toolkit for primary schools 2018-2023) and the Department of Education (DES, Department of education wellbeing policy statement and framework for practice 2018-2023, 2018) in relation to healthy eating habits at school lunch breaks. Healthy Eating is promoted by the staff as part of our Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme. Healthy eating habits which are developed at home and supported by the school will benefit the children for the rest of their lives. This policy is available on the school website and in hard copy by request.

### **Rationale**

Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra aims to promote the development of the whole child, physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Our school recognises that a healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting children's health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development. Children who eat a balanced diet while in school have constant energy, are more alert, have better concentration and healthy teeth. It is hoped that this policy will help parents when preparing a packed lunch.

### **Aims**

- To promote an awareness of a balanced diet
- Positively effect healthy eating among school age children
- Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food.
- Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which is hoped will become lifelong habits.

### **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.

### **Content**

The following guide is designed to help you to provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children. Children are encouraged not to share lunches in school.

Foods recommended for school lunches include the following:

### **Breads and Alternatives**

- Breads and Rolls, preferably wholemeal.
- Crispbreads
- Tucs
- Crackers (and cheese)
- Plain rice cakes
- Portion of pasta (preferably wholemeal)
- Portion of rice (preferably wholegrain)
- Homemade scones
- Homemade brown bread
- Burger buns
- Wraps, Pitta Bread
- Bagels
- Bread sticks

### **Savouries/Fillings**

- Meat: eg. ham, beef/chicken/turkey
- Salami
- Parma ham
- Smoked salmon
- Tinned fish eg. Tuna, sardines
- Dips: eg. Hummous
- Peanut butter
- Chickpeas
- Cheese
- Coleslaw
- Potato salad
- Yogurts
- Homemade smoothies
- Nuts (unless there is an allergy in your child's classroom)

### **Fruit and Vegetables**

- Fruit and berries: eg bananas, apples, plums, peaches, water melon, pineapple chunks, mandarin orange, berries (blueberries, raspberries, gooseberries)
- Seedless grapes cut
- Cucumber
- Sweetcorn/baby corn
- Carrots
- Peppers

- Snap peas
- Raisins
- Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame etc)

### **Treat day**

As a reward for adhering to the healthy eating policy and to allow parents extra freedom when preparing lunches, children can bring **one** treat to school on a Friday.

Appropriate treats include the following:

- a treat size chocolate bar,
- small portion of popcorn
- homemade bun, flapjack.
- two biscuits
- chocolate spread
- small tub of jelly,
- small croissant (chocolate or plain)
- small packet of jelly sweets.
- Cereal bar

These items should not be included in lunches during the week.

Please note that the school reserves the right to give children a treat on a special occasion including but not limited to the following: Halloween, Christmas, Easter, Summer, Pancake Tuesday, after school matches, School Tours, School Sports Day. Teachers will generally not give treats on a Friday unless it falls into the special occasions mentioned above. As mentioned above, pupils have the freedom to bring their own treat to school on a Friday.

### **Birthday celebrations**

Birthdays will be celebrated in school. In order to follow our Healthy Eating policy and in the interest of fairness we would ask that parents refrain from sending in birthday treats to the school.

### **Rewards**

Teachers will not give food as rewards for good behaviour as rewarding good behaviour with food contradicts the messages given as part of the curriculum. Teachers will use alternative rewards to food rewards. eg: extra playtime, choosing a class activity, act of kindness box.

### **Foods that are prohibited**

The following foods are not acceptable as treats for school lunches in our policy.

- Crisps (including crisp style snacks)

- Chewing gum
- Sugary drinks (including fizzy drinks, fruit juices etc).
- Lollipops
- Fruit winders

### **Drinks**

Milk and plain water are best for school lunches. The HSE recommends that children are allowed to have a bottle of plain water on their desk so that they can drink as required throughout the day. The school authorities support this recommendation. It is desirable that children bring water in a resealable bottle with preferable a sports cap to place on their desks. Older children may require two bottles particularly in hot weather.

While we promote plain water, you may add a small amount of sugar free orange or black-current squash or add fruit. Many of the commercially produced fruit drinks contain a lot of sugar and therefore contribute to tooth decay.

### **Hot Drinks**

For health and safety reasons hot drinks eg tea, coffee, hot chocolate and soups are not permitted. School staff are not permitted to heat food, drinks for pupils.

### **Guidelines for Healthy Lunchtimes**

- Children bring a healthy lunch in a secure lunch box.
- Children are asked to bring their water in a plastic bottle with a screw top/sports cap.
- All lunch boxes and drinks bottles are to be labelled with child's name.
- Lunch times are supervised by a teacher. Children are given adequate time to eat lunch.
- Children are expected to remain seated while eating lunch.
- Children are asked to bring their own spoon if required.
- Teachers/SNAs will assist small children with opening of boxes etc.
- Children are requested to put fruit waste, wrappers, cartons, bottles etc., into their lunch box and take them home.
- No bottles or drinks to be brought into the playground.
- Every effort will be made to contact parent if child forgets or loses their lunch.
- If your child has a food allergy, please inform the school.

### **Lunches and Litter**

Lough Cútra NS is a Green School and lunch packaging creates a waste disposal problem in the school therefore we ask children to bring home their packaging each day.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in the month of March every second year. The current policy is due to be reviewed in March 2023.

**Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

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

Chairperson BOM

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Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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