

## **Clashmore National School Healthy Eating Guidelines**

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme at Clashmore 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).

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

In promoting this objective, we will:

- Inform parents about the school's healthy eating guidelines and practice;
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school guidelines and making modifications to it.

To promote healthy eating habits, our school participated in the *Food Dudes* programme in 2018. This programme encourages children to try and eat more fruit and vegetables. This programme was very successful in engendering a positive attitude in the children to fruit and vegetables.

To compliment this programme and further engrain healthy eating habits in the school, we will introduce Healthy Eating Guidelines starting from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.

### **Aims**

1. To encourage a positive attitude to food
2. To promote a healthy diet
3. To educate about different foods
4. To promote good eating habits
5. To encourage children to have a healthy diet
6. To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school

### **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 importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level and is taught each year.

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

### **Fruit & Vegetables**

Apples, Banana, Peach  
Mandarins, Orange segments,  
Fruit Salad, dried fruit,  
Plum, Pineapple cubes  
Grapes,  
Cucumber, Sweetcorn  
Carrots, peppers

### **Savouries**

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

### **Drinks**

Water  
Low sugar cordial (only with Lunch)  
Milk  
Fruit yogurt only

**We only allow cordial at lunch time, so each child needs to have water as an additional drink during the school day.**

**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:

- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars (Very high in sugar)
- Fruit winders
- Popcorn.
- Lollipops
- Peanuts or peanut butter
- Chocolate spread
- Chocolate Yogurts

*If such foods are brought to school, the children will be asked to bring them home in their lunchboxes.*

**Please note that fizzy drinks, crisps, peanuts or peanut products, lollipops and chewing gum are forbidden in the school.**

So as to take a proactive approach to healthy lunches, teachers will monitor children's lunchboxes to ensure that the healthy eating guidelines are being adhered to and from time to time reward good practice.

### **A Word about Milk**

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent such 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/her to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

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

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

### **Treat Day**

Friday will be our treat day.

On this day, children can bring **ONE** of the following:

- Treat/ fun sized bar or Treat/ fun sized bag of sweets
- cereal bar or fruit winder
- small home bakes
- Popcorn or pretzels
- Chocolate spread, chocolate yogurts (except spreads/yogurts containing nuts)

The children are encouraged to eat the treat **AFTER** their lunch is eaten.

Foods with artificial additive and colours e.g. Smarties, M & M's, boiled sweets, cereal bars etc. should be avoided. Special events and celebrations e.g. Green Flag days, food festivals, food demonstrations, end of term parties - on these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "every day food".

### **Other Considerations- Allergies**

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be relayed to all staff.

**There is a total ban on nuts and nut products due to serious allergies of some pupils.**

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

### **Green Flag School**

As we are a green school we must keep in mind how we can reduce, reuse and recycle.

With this in mind, children are also asked to:

- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons
- use a drink bottle that is easily recognised clearly labelled no juice cartons allowed
- not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.

### **Communication and Ratification**

A copy of these guidelines will be included in the enrolment pack for new pupils.

These guidelines were approved by the Board of Management on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.  
They will be reviewed in June 2022