

# KILMALEY NATIONAL SCHOOL

## Healthy Eating Policy

This healthy eating policy was devised by the staff and Board of Management of Kilmaley National School with the guidance of Dr Anne Griffin, a statutory registered dietitian.

### Rationale

Kilmaley National School, through this policy, aims to support all in our school community- children, staff and parents/guardians - to develop positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to understand and appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health. We wish to promote 'the personal development and wellbeing of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the importance of eating healthy food for their school lunch. Healthy eating and active living are supported throughout the school's education curriculum. For example, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children; the Science curriculum deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age.

### 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 enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition and hydration for growing, developing, staying healthy and positive well-being.
- To learn about different foods and drinks so that the children can make informed choices, making the healthier choice the easier choice as a life-long habit.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food and drink choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.
- To provide members of staff, parents and those involved with school activities with clear information about healthy eating.
- To increase environmental awareness and social responsibility among the school community so that reusable containers are encouraged rather than wrappers (cling film and tin-foil).
- To implement the medical guidance in relation to the nutritional needs of children with nutrition related conditions, food intolerances, allergies, etc.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- It is a parent's/guardians responsibility to provide healthy lunches and drinks which support healthy eating habits as outlined in the guidelines below
- Parents / guardians should inform the class teacher of any special dietary requirements/allergies that their child has.
- It is the child's responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others.
- Teachers/staff / parents / guardians have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits.
- The school has a responsibility to provide the children with classes on nutrition, healthy eating and how to make the healthier choice for a balanced diet.
- The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, children –will work together to support this policy. All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on this policy and this will report back as appropriate to the Staff/ Principal/Parents & Board of Management.
- The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

#### **Guidelines.**

#### **A healthy lunch box includes:**

1. One portions from the bread, cereals group. One portion is:
  - 2 thin slices of wholemeal bread • 1 small bread roll • 1 tortilla wrap • 1 pitta bread • 4–6 crackers or breadsticks • 1 cup of cooked rice, pasta or couscous • 1 small bagel
1. One portion from the meat and the meat alternatives group. One portion is:
  - 2 slices (50–75g) of cooked meat • 1–2 eggs (hard-boiled, sliced or mashed) • A small can (100g) of tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines • 4 tablespoons of hummus - try out as a dip with carrots or celery
1. At least 1 (ideally 2 or more) portions from fruits and vegetables. One portion is:
  - 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar size fruit • 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or similar size fruit • A small glass (150ml) of unsweetened fruit juice • Half a tin (3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons) of fruit in its own juice • 1 heaped dessertspoon of dried fruit (for example, raisins or sultanas) • 1 small bunch of grapes (10 grapes) • 1 small salad (for example, dessert bowl sized salad of lettuce, tomato, cucumber and celery sticks) • 3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons of vegetables (for example, chopped or grated carrots)
1. One portion from the dairy products. One portion is:
  - 1 glass or mini-carton of milk (200ml) • A pot of natural or low-fat yoghurt (125ml) or custard • 2 cheese triangles • 2 thumbs (25g) of cheese such as cheddar, edam or gouda varieties

1. The following foods **do not support** a healthy lunch policy and should not be included in your child's lunch box; crisps, chewing gum, sweets, bars including cereal bars, cakes with icing, biscuits, lollipops, chocolate, chocolate spread, yoghurt with chocolate toppings, crispy buns, **due to the incidence of severe allergy to peanuts, mixed nuts and eggs amongst some pupils, the following are NOT ALLOWED at school:**
  - Peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
  - Nut related products such as chocolate spread, Nutella, nut based breads and cereal/health bars with traces of nuts in them.
  - Eggs and egg related products such as egg mayonnaise sandwiches.
1. Ask children not to share their lunches.
2. If your child has eaten peanuts/nuts before coming to school, please be sure your child's hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering the school.
3. **Healthy snack options (see suggestions below)**

Suggestions of healthy school lunch options:

- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, pepper and cucumber.
- Washed, raw vegetables (for example, cherry tomatoes)
- Half a tin of fruit (in its own juice)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or whole wheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Plain rice cakes (not chocolate flavoured)
- Natural or low fat yogurt with fresh fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned in its own juice)
- Wholemeal or plain scones.
- Pasta or rice
- Cheese
- Hummus
- Olives

More suggestions can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.safefood.eu/Publications/Consumer-info/Healthy-lunchboxes.aspx>

<https://www.bordbia.ie/consumer/aboutfood/healthylunchboxes/pages/healthylunchboxes.aspx>

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/healthy-lunch-box-to-grow,-learn-and-play-part-1.html>

## Hydration and Healthy Drink Choices

Adequate hydration has always been linked to good health. Continuous hydration is required to increase concentration, reduce irritability, headaches and various infections. According to the HSE; “there are no recommendations for the amount of water or other fluids children need. However, like adults, to stay healthy it is important for children to replace the water they lose to prevent dehydration.”<sup>[1]</sup>

- Water, milk and unsweetened natural juice are recommended healthy drink choices.
- Children should be encouraged to use re-useable containers for safety and litter reasons. Non-spill reusable drink bottles are preferable and can be kept on the children’s desks to sip from as they require. **Cans and glass bottles are not permitted. Hot drinks are not permitted.**
- Pupils are encouraged to bring extra drinks during warmer weather and when going on an activity outing such going to matches.

## Health and Safety

For health and safety concerns the following are recommended:

1. Please exclude popcorn, nuts and egg mayonnaise from your child’s lunch.
2. Please cut grapes in half for the younger classes
3. Please do not give flasks with hot drinks.
4. Please use re-usable non-spill drink bottles as can and glass bottles are not permitted.

## Implementation:

- Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, under the direction of parents/guardians for making, packing and bringing a varied healthy lunch and drink to school each day.
- As a school community to actively support, encourage and praise healthy eating choices.
- Pupils are to inform a member of staff if he/she has left lunch at home so teacher can contact parents / guardians.
- If children bring prohibited food or drink into school, they will be reminded of the healthy eating policy. The child may be asked to put it away and bring it home in their lunchboxes or may be left on teacher desk and given to parent / guardian by teacher, provided there is other food in the child’s lunchbox. If children persist in bringing unhealthy food or drink to school,

the class teacher and principal will organise a meeting with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy.

**Success Criteria (how will these be measured or demonstrated? If they can't suggest rethink or remove/replace with measurable criteria):**

We will know the policy is effective by:

- The overall increase in consumption of healthy food by the school community.
- The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff.
- The level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom
- Other comments/suggestion:
- What can the school do to role model healthy eating, active living now or near future? E.g. allow fruit snack at reading time, encourage disposal of organic waste in school compost system, describe how much time is allowed to children at teach break for eating (anticipating usual comments re “not enough time to eat”) encourage active transport to school (walking/cycling) through promotion of road safety, bike racks, discontinue use of packets of jellies from teacher as rewards/treats, etc.

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[1] <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/D/Dehydration/>