



Dunderrow National School

Healthy Eating Policy



Introductory Statement

Dunderrow National School is a Health Promoting School since 2006. Its first Health Promoting Status (HSE) Flag was awarded in 2010 and Health Promoting Status has been maintained every year since, hence a second flag was awarded to Dunderrow NS in June 2015.

Completed surveys, discussion with parents, children, staff, Parents' Association and Board of Management and HSE Guidelines resulted in a Healthy Eating Policy being put in place for Dunderrow National School in 2007.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Dunderrow National School is committed to promoting the holistic well-being of all of the pupils in its care, developing the spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual. The school strives towards developing the full potential of every pupil in communication, literacy, numeracy and relevant life skills. It is acknowledged by all parties that there is an important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively which results in improvements in concentration and behaviour. This in turn assists pupils in achieving their full potential.

Rationale

The purpose of this healthy eating policy is:

- To follow the food and nutrition guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children - Eat Smart and Move More (published in 2013), DES Guidelines Circular 0013/2016
- As part of the Health Promoting School Initiative the school will make available H.S.E. information with regards to Healthy School Lunches explaining the food pyramid and the benefits of eating a healthy diet. The food pyramid outlines an excellent common sense approach to healthy and balanced eating. (See Food Pyramid, HSE Guidelines in Appendix 1).
- Safefood HSE Healthy Lunches is attached to this policy with practical tips for you and your child on what to include in a healthy lunchbox
- To ensure pupils and parent(s) / guardian(s) become aware of the importance of food for growth and development as part of the S.P.H.E. curriculum through the medium of
 - ❖ Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum Junior Infants – 6th Class)
 - ❖ Making choices (See Teacher Curriculum Guidelines p 11-13)
 - ❖ Inviting parents and outside agencies to assist in the promotion of healthy living through cookery, nutritional workshops and using HSE initiatives such as Food Dudes Programme which was rolled out during the 2014-2015 and 2019/20 school year.

Aims

The aim of this healthy eating policy is to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in Dunderrow National School promotes the health and well-being of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

Our school also acknowledges that it can play a role in the wider community to promote family health.

Through the promotion of healthy eating our school aims to:

- ❖ Improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues.
- ❖ Present **consistent informed messages** about healthy eating within school and encourage pupils and parents to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
- ❖ To raise levels of pupils' concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- ❖ To encourage pupils to eat a healthy lunch.
- ❖ To encourage parents to ensure that children are given a healthy breakfast before school.
- ❖ To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons etc. and to recycle all food and drinks products, where applicable.

Dunderrow National School will work toward these aims with the parent(s) / guardian(s), teachers and health professionals.

A Healthy Lunch

At present we encourage all members of the school community to bring a healthy lunch daily. A healthy lunch is defined as something taken from each of the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid, which is in line with the Dept. of Health directive on Healthy Eating.

Lunches should be composed of a variety of foods and include at least one item from the different food groups.

There should be something in the lunch box from:-

1. Fruit and vegetable group – Some typical choices are a whole fruit, a fruit juice drink, vegetable soup, salad or cooked/raw vegetables.
2. Cereal group – Foods such as bread, rice, pasta, potatoes or pitta bread.
3. Dairy group – Milk, cheese or yoghurt
4. Protein-rich food – Meat, chicken, fish, egg, beans, peas, lentils or cheese.

The following foods outlined below in Category 1 are examples of what is suitable for lunches:

Category 1

Whole fresh fruit	Fruit juice	Vegetable soup	Batons of raw vegetables (not veggie straws/crisps)
Salad vegetables in sandwiches	Wraps and rolls	Crackers	Sandwiches
Fruit chunks in ready to peel packs	Rice cakes (not chocolate coated)	Bread sticks	Pasta salad
Homemade fruit salad	Potato salad	Rice salad	Bean salad
Cheese triangles	Pasta salad	Yoghurt drinks	Smoothies
Tinned fish in brine	Fromage frais	Yogurt pots	Cheese
Chicken	Turkey	Ham	Hummus/tapenade
Egg	Dried Fruits	Scones	Milk/water/non Fizzy drinks

Treats and Celebrations

- Food from the top shelf of the food pyramid - “a treat” (treat size being recommended), will be allowed on Friday or at the end of term as a well done reward. End of Term will be celebrated with a class activity and one treat.
- Food choices for school special occasions and celebrations will be directed towards more healthy options as agreed by all parties (e.g an ice-cream at the final practice for Communion/Confirmation)

One of the following foods in Category 2 are allowed only as a Friday treat/special occasions:

Category 2

Chocolate bars-treat size	Popcorn - treat size	Fruit Winders	Biscuits-all types
Sweets and jellies – treat size	Doughnuts/ Danish pastries	Small piece of cake – including homemade	Nutella sandwich
Croissants	Cereal Bars, e.g. Nature Valley	Flapjacks/oat bars	Muffins/Buns/Fudge

Health & Safety

- ❖ On the grounds of health & safety chewing gum is not allowed in school at any time
- ❖ Due to different types of food allergies across the school any baking should be an informed decision by the class teacher, having read all files. Cooking lessons are preferred to baking lessons in accordance with our Health Promoting School status.

The following foods are ***not*** allowed at any time:

Crisps and similar bagged corn/potato products e.g Snax, Hula Hoops, Pringles etc. Nachos/Doritos	Fizzy Drinks Sports Drinks	Chewing Gum
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Lunchbox Guidelines

As children respond better to routine and regular meals (see appendix 3 - HSE Meal Planner guidelines) the following recommendations will be promoted as guidelines for a healthy lunchbox

- * All children should have a lunch on a daily basis.
- * Lunch portions given should be age appropriate so as to maintain a healthy weight for your child (see appendix 2 - Portion Control is Weight Control).
- * Lunch size and content should be determined to meet the needs of an individual child.
- * Using DES Guidelines children will be given time to eat lunch in class before play. It is imperative that children with encouragement from parents and teachers eat lunch during this time.

Drinks

Drinks, which are encouraged, include milk, water, natural fruit juices and yogurt drinks. An outdoor water fountain is available to all children at school. Cartons of juice with high sugar content e.g. Ribena, Capri-sun, etc. should be kept as a Friday treat.

We encourage all parents/guardians to support the policy in the interest of their own child’s health, nutrition and the benefits of healthy eating.

A copy of the Healthy Eating Policy will be included as part of the enrolment pack for new pupils enrolling at Dunderrow National School and will be on view in school and on school website.

The Parents' Association of Dunderrow National School will also promote this policy.

Success Criteria

We will know that the Healthy Eating Policy is effective if all the children bring healthy lunches to school. It is essential that there is consistency from all members of staff in promoting our Healthy Eating Policy. The policy may not be broken for rewards – see Code of Discipline for rewards and sanctions.

Roles and Responsibility – by all parties involved in your child's education

The Healthy Eating Policy will be supported and developed and the school will co-ordinate the progress of the policy, encourage and accept feedback from parent(s) / guardian(s) and pupils on its implementation.

Timeframe for Implementation

The Healthy Eating Policy has been fully implemented since September 2007. This was updated in 2016 and was reviewed again in February 2020 as part of the Food Dudes Initiative. Review and update took place again in September 2023 in line with the needs of the children attending our school.

Ratification and Communication

This Healthy Eating Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Dunderrow National School at a meeting held on 24th February 2020. It was updated again by all stakeholders, especially the children of our school, in May 2021. It has been reviewed and amended by all staff on 27/09/23 and by Board of Management on 25/09/23



Chairperson B.O.M



Principal

Date: 11/10/23

Healthy Eating Key Points

Friday is treat day. Choose **1 item** from this list:

Chocolate bars-treat size	Popcorn - treat size	Fruit Winders	Biscuits-all types
Sweets and jellies – treat size	Doughnuts/ Danish pastries	Small piece of cake – including homemade	Nutella sandwich
Croissants	Cereal Bars, e.g. Nature Valley	Flapjacks/oat bars	Muffins/Buns/Fudge

Foods that are **not allowed** are listed here:

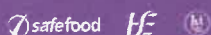
Crisps and similar bagged corn/potato products e.g Snax, Hula Hoops, Pringles etc. Nachos/Doritos	Fizzy Drinks Sports Drinks Chewing Gum
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Nuts and nut butter are allowed as currently we do not have any children with allergies to nuts.



Healthy Lunchboxes

Practical tips for you and your children on how to prepare a healthy lunchbox



Good food habits set early in childhood can last a lifetime.

Lunches provide around one third of our daily nutritional needs, so it's important to put some thought and planning into them. Here are some tips on how to prepare a healthy lunchbox that your child will eat and enjoy.

Tired of packing the same old lunch? - Keep it varied

- Include a **wide variety of foods** – fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, protein and dairy
- Add interest to the lunchbox – try some of the following ideas:
 - **Vary the types of bread** for example, pitta bread, bagels, wholemeal rolls – keep a stock in the freezer
 - **Cook extra rice or pasta** in the evening – these can make great salads
 - **Try a pasta salad or filled tortillas**
- Fluids are important for children – up to 6 cups of fluid should be encouraged daily. **Milk and plain water** are the best options. Brightly coloured bottles can make plain water more interesting!
- **Get your child involved** in packing lunches. Let them help choose some element of their lunch. Pick a colourful lunchbox or let them decorate one with stickers
- Children often need to see and taste new foods several times before they accept them, so **try out new ideas at teatime** or the weekend before including them in a lunchbox

Please note that your child's school may have a policy relating to food allergies, which does not permit particular food items to be brought to school.

Make sure it's clean and safe

Remember that sandwiches containing meat or other foods that require refrigeration should be kept as cold as possible until lunch.

Help keep lunches cool and safe by following these tips:

- An insulated box or bag can be used to help keep lunches cool.
 - It is important that lunches are not kept in a warm place such as near radiators or in direct sunlight
 - Throw away any perishable food that hasn't been eaten at the end of the day
 - Wash and dry reusable water bottles, lids and lunchboxes every day in warm soapy water
 - To keep the cool air in, minimize the number of times your child needs to open the lunchbox, by packing other food items that don't need to be kept cool separately
 - Cut back on single use plastics like cling-film and use reusable containers.
- And last, always remember to wash your hands before eating lunch.**



Here's what should go in a healthy lunchbox

Vegetables, salad and fruit

At least one portion from the fruit and vegetables food group...

- 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar size fruit
- 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis, mandarins 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 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)
- A bowl of homemade vegetable soup in a thermos flask for older children
- A small pot of fruit salad
- A small salad box

Did you know?

To avoid soggy sandwiches put juicy vegetables between some lettuce and other sandwich fillings for example, cheese. For younger children cutting fruit into manageable size chunks will encourage them to eat more fruit.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

One portion from the meat and meat alternatives food group...

- 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

Note: Fish such as tinned tuna or salmon should be included in the lunchbox at least once a week – remove any bones

Did you know?

Lean cuts of meat such as chicken breast are lower in salt than processed meats such as ham and bacon. Choose lean meat more often than processed meat.





Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

One portion from the bread and cereals group which would be...

- 2 thin slices of wholemeal bread
- 1 small wholemeal bread roll
- 1 wholemeal tortilla wrap
- 1 wholemeal pitta bread
- 4-6 wholemeal crackers or breadsticks
- 1 cup of cooked brown rice, pasta or couscous
- 1 small wholemeal bagel

Did you know?

Including wholegrain varieties of breads and cereals in our diet can help us feel fuller for longer and prevent constipation.

Milk, yoghurt and cheese

One portion from the dairy products food group...

- 1 glass or mini-carton of milk (200ml)
- A pot of natural or low-fat yoghurt (125ml)
- 2 cheese triangles
- 2 thumbs (25g) of cheese such as cheddar, edam or gouda varieties

Notes: Low-fat dairy products are suitable for children over two years of age.

Did you know?

Dairy products are especially important in the diets of children and teenagers as they provide calcium to support growing bones and teeth. Low-fat natural yoghurt with fruit is the best option.

Suitable drinks for children



It is important that children take in enough fluids during the day. If they do not drink enough, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak. Drinks should always be included for break-time and lunch.

Plain water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children. Because of its natural sugar content, unsweetened fruit juice should only be consumed with meals and ideally diluted (one part juice to ten parts water).

If you are unsure about whether a drink contains added sugar, check the ingredients list. Less common terms for sugar that may appear on the ingredients list are sucrose, fructose, glucose, maltose, dextrose and syrup. See our table for the low down on suitable drinks.



- Milk (low-fat preferably)
- Plain water

Plain water and milk are the best choice at any time.



- Unsweetened fruit juice (fruit juice from concentrate is suitable also if it does not contain added sugar)
- Flavoured milk*
- Diluted sugar-free squash
- Yoghurt or milk drinks*
- Smoothies**
- Fruit juice drink (unsweetened)

Limit to a small glass once a day and its best to have it at mealtimes.















- Fruit juice drink (sweetened)
- Fizzy drinks (including diet versions)

Don't provide important nutrients and are not tooth friendly.

* Compare brands and choose those that are lower in sugar
** Homemade smoothies using whole fruit are best

5-day lunchbox planner

We often end up putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchbox contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following planner shows you some examples of snacks and lunch items.

Monday
1 medium wholemeal bread roll with tomato and cheese +  + Handful of carrot sticks + Pot of low-fat yoghurt + 
Tuesday
Small wholemeal pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn +  + 1/2 wholemeal scone +  + 
Wednesday
2 tablespoons of wholemeal pasta with 1 tablespoon of tomatoes and vegetables +  + 2 wholemeal crackers with low-fat cheddar cheese +  + 
Thursday
2 slices of wholemeal bread with cooked ham and lettuce + Slices of pepper, cucumbers, sugar snap peas or mangetout +  + Pot of low-fat yoghurt + 
Friday
Wholemeal tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce +  + Small tub of stewed fruit + 6 cherry tomatoes + 

Remember:
Use low-fat spread, low-fat mayonnaise or relish instead of full-fat options
Smaller portions for smaller children

Ideas for healthy snacks and lunches are only a click away

Healthy eating policies

Schools recognise that children who eat a nutritious lunch in school are better able to concentrate and learn in the classroom. For this reason most schools discourage foods such as chocolate, sweets and crisps. Many have policies to support families to make better choices when planning and preparing school lunches.

Ask your school if they have a policy.

Tasty, healthy lunches

Check out the [safefood](#) website for easy ways to choose a balanced nutritious and tasty lunch for your children each day.



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