

GRANAGH NATIONAL SCHOOL

HEALTHY EATING INITIATIVE

Healthy Eating Initiative:

Introductory Statement: Children's eating habits will strongly influence their chances of living a healthy life-style. A survey was conducted with the Senior children in the school, and a questionnaire was sent to all parents on the issue of introducing a Healthy Eating Initiative. The results show that the overwhelming majority of parents and children are in favour of the school adopting a Healthy Eating Initiative. With this in mind the staff of Granagh National School formulated this Healthy Eating Initiative in May 2012. It is intended to encourage children to get into good dietary habits. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. A copy of this initiative will be kept in the school office.

Rationale:

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. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in Granagh N.S.:

SPHE: Primary School Curriculum:

- Strand Unit: Taking Care of my Body; Food and Nutrition (Curriculum: J.Infants-6th Class)
- Making Choices (see Teacher Guidelines pp11-13)

SCIENCE:

- Strand: Living Things ; Strand Unit: Myself: Human life Processes (Curriculum: J.Infants -6th class) (see Teacher *Guidelines p.10-11*)

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

As part of our overall school policy the Healthy Eating Policy helps to promote the health of each child and to provide a foundation for healthy living. Our school aims to provide a holistic education for our children and health of mind and body is an ideal we aim for in all our pupils.

Aims: The aims of our policy are:

- ✓ To make the "healthier choice the easier choice"
- ✓ To promote nutritional awareness e.g. looking at the ingredients in foods-what is good or bad
- ✓ To positively enable healthy eating among school-age children
- ✓ To raise levels of concentration and energy within class through the consumption of healthy food.
- ✓ To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children which it is hoped will become lifelong eating habits
- ✓ To provide members of staff, parents and those involved in school activities with clear information

- ✓ To protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies
- ✓ To support the school's environmental policy in insisting on reusable containers, minimum use of wrappers etc.

Content:

1. Healthy Lunches:

Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch, which helps to maintain their level of concentration in the classroom throughout the day. A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid. These are:

- Bread/ Cereals
- Fruit/ Fruit juice and vegetables
- Milk, cheese and yogurt
- Meat/ chicken/fish and alternatives

Here are some simple guidelines to help you and your child make that simple choice:

Allowed:

- Drinks: water, juice drinks, soup, milk, diluted drinks etc,
- Yoghurt & cheese.
- Raisins.
- Sandwiches/crackers (wholemeal preferable) with a healthy filling.
- Rice cakes.
- All types of fruit & vegetables (for younger children oranges should be peeled and ready to eat). Since September 2012 there has been a fruit/veg break. Each child is encouraged to eat a portion of fruit/ veg at this time for a few minutes.

2. Prohibited Foods:

In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children the following foods are prohibited, except on treat days:

- Crisps, sweets, bars, biscuits.
- Breakfast rolls.
- Chocolate.
- Fizzy drinks and energy drinks.
- Muffins, cakes or buns.
- Chocolate spread.
- Popcorn.

On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class . These may be special occasions such as:

- End-of-term parties
- Halloween
- School trips and events
- Other specific occasion or event

Although a birthday is a special occasion, children are not allowed to bring in a treat to celebrate their birthday.

N.B. Cans and glasses are not permitted for safety and litter reasons. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum to reduce litter and protect our school environment.

Implementation:

Each September (as part of a phased implementation of the initiative, for the month of September) parents will be reminded of the Healthy Eating Initiative adopted by the school. Literature, advice and tips will be sent to parents to support the implementation of this initiative. Ideas for foods to include in the children's lunch, and foods to be avoided will be circulated to all parents in September and all staff will teach the children about Healthy Eating each September and plan activities i.e. tasting of foods to encourage to try new food. The children will also be involved in devising healthy lunches.

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as they are not permitted to eat "unhealthy foods" in school.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher and principal will organise a meeting with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Initiative.

It is very difficult to implement initiative successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Initiatives to see children who do not. All parents will be expected to comply with the Healthy Eating Initiative.

Success Criteria:

We will know the initiative is effective by:

- ◆ Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods
- ◆ The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff
- ◆ The level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom

Roles and Responsibility:

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include variety.

Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others.

Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits.

The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, children –will work together to promote the progress of this policy.

All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on its performance which will be reported back as appropriate to the Principal and staff.

The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the BoM.

Useful Information:

The Health Promotion unit has a booklet called "Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools". It is available to download from www.healthpromotion.ie The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and has suggestions

on what to include in school lunch-boxes. www.indi.ie The Voluntary Health Insurance website (VHI) has a section on children returning to school after sickness which includes advice on healthy lunches www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-011.jsp

Monitoring & Review

This policy was originally formulated in May 2012 and this review was ratified by the Board on Management on the 17th of October 2018.

This policy will be due for review in two years, that is, during the school year 2020-2021. It may be revisited sooner if the need arises. The policy has been communicated and approved by representatives of the Parents Association. It will be promoted in the school as part of the SPHE policy and its importance will be stressed in letters home to the parents.

Signed: _____
Chairperson Board of Management.