

## Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy



### **The Healthy Lunch Guidelines**

Children in each class were asked to discuss what they thought should be in a healthy lunch. From these discussions the following guidelines emerged.

What is a healthy lunch?

- It is full of goodness like protein, vitamins and calcium.
- Contains food with no sugar, because too much sugar is bad for your teeth.
- Contains no colouring or additives.
- Gives us strength and energy
- Makes us fit and healthy
- Helps our brain power

What could be in a healthy lunch?

- Sandwiches or rolls with cheese, meat or other fillings.
- Pitta bread, crackers
- Fruit
- Raisins
- Vegetables
- Pasta
- Salad
- Yoghurt

What should not be in a healthy lunch?

- Crisps
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies
- Chewing gum
- Cake, biscuits, pastries or doughnuts
- Chocolate spread
- Fizzy drinks
- Flavoured milk

What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?

- Water

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- Fruit juices
  - Diluted drinks
  - Milk
- Smoothies

What drinks should not be allowed?

- Fizzy drinks
- Sugary drinks
- Hot drinks (in case we spill them)

Who should make sure everyone follows the rules?

- Our parents, because they make our lunch and should set a good example. They are responsible for our health.
- We should, because it's our health and we want to be fit and full of energy.
- Teachers, because they can see what's in our lunch boxes and know who's eating the right foods everyday.
- The Principal

What should we do when children bring in foods not allowed?

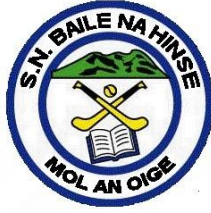
- The children bring the food/drink home in their lunch box.

Should we make exceptions for special occasions?

- Yes, for treats after communion or confirmation
- Yes, for end of term parties

The children of Ballinahinch National School are very keen to have healthy lunches and show a good understanding of what that means. We hope these guidelines will assist everybody in making healthy choices.

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### **BALLINAHINCH NATIONAL SCHOOL**

### **HEALTHY EATING POLICY**

**Introductory Statement:** Children's eating habits will strongly influence their chances of living a healthy life-style. With this in mind our Healthy Eating Policy was formulated. 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 policy will be kept in the school office.

**Rationale:** Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching out to the whole school community; the children, families, teachers and staff. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents, teachers and staff in encouraging children to develop healthy eating habits. Knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is of importance to students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum: 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: Infants -6th class, see Teacher Guidelines p.10-11)

## Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy

**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, a healthy 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 food what are we eating and how can this benefit our health?
- 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:**

### **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

## **Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy**

Drinks: water, unsweetened juice or milk- should be in a recyclable plastic bottle which can be refilled every day. Fizzy drinks are **NOT** allowed.

Yoghurt, sandwiches/crackers with a healthy filling- **NO** chocolate spread please. All types of fruit

### **Prohibited Foods:**

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

Crisps, sweets, bars of chocolate, chocolate spreads, biscuits, buns and cakes and fizzy and sweetened drinks.

**Treat Days** – Friday of each week, end of term parties, school trips or specific school occasion.

On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class. Although it is a special occasion treats are not allowed on a child's birthday. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment.

### **Food Dudes:**

In the final term of the 2017/18 school year, the school once again took part in a Healthy Eating Programme entitled "Food Dudes". This was sponsored by An Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the scheme received a "counteracting obesity" award from the WHO. Through the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, the Food Dudes programme encourages children to enjoy a healthy diet, and it reinforces the healthy eating culture within the school. The programme intends to encourage children to pursue and continue the positive eating habits engendered by the programme this year and in forthcoming years.

## **Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy**

### **Implementation:**

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 “junk” 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 Policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

### **Success Criteria:**

We will know the policy 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 Board of Management.

## Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy

### **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](http://www.healthpromotion.ie). The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch-boxes. [www.indi.ie](http://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/hf011.jsp](http://www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf011.jsp) Ratification and Communication:

The Board of Management ratified the policy at its meeting on

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

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

Chairperson of B.O.M.

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

Principal

The policy has been communicated to all staff and children. It will be promoted in the school as part of the SPHE policy and its importance will be stressed in newsletters.

## **Ballinahinch N.S. Healthy Eating Policy**

Dear Parents,

As you may be aware, over the last few months we have been developing a Healthy Eating Policy for our school. For young people to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. As well, healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well-being.

In recent weeks the children have been exploring the theme of Healthy Eating with their class teachers. During lessons on Healthy Eating as part of the SPHE curriculum the views of the children were collected (see Healthy Eating Guidelines). The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class children also conducted surveys and collected data on our school lunches. The results of both helped to inform us on our policy.

The policy was presented to the chairperson of the Board and will be ratified at the next meeting and is available to view from the school office on appointment.

For this policy to be successful, it is essential that a whole-school approach to healthy eating is taken – with students, parents and staff working together to provide consistent messages on healthy eating.

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



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