

St. Patrick's National School, Cloonlyon

Healthy Eating Policy

This Healthy Eating Policy sees that Food Dudes Healthy Eating Food Programs is in place as a means of raising awareness of healthy eating and initiating a healthy lifestyle with regard to food choice.

In addition to the below considerations, the teachers have requested to please send in healthy foods that your child would typically eat. The contents of the lunchbox is often a cause for debate between teacher and child as the teacher tries to get the child to eat the food prepared and the child is stating that "I don't like that'. Mealtimes should be a time of enjoyment not argument. A recommendation from a parent for children (from about age 8 upwards) to prepare their own lunch may assist in reducing the number of debates in school and at home.

Please also consider that each teacher has 20+ children in their class and we should not expect the teachers to 'police' the contents of lunchboxes for compliance with the Healthy Eating Policy. Please discuss the following with your child(ren) so we can work towards a pleasant school environment and healthy future.

Food and Drinks for Healthy Children

The following lists of healthy foods and drinks are suggestions for your lunch box. These suggestions were obtained from the HSE Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service. Every family has different healthy eating ideas, so please share them with us or have your child share them in class.

Foods: Try to include one from each category in your lunch box.

- Energy Foods - breads, crackers, plain rice cakes, tortillas, wraps, baps, rolls, scones, cereals, potatoes, rice, pasta
- Fruits & Vegetables - apples, oranges, pears, bananas, peaches, kiwi, grapes, mandarins, strawberries, melon, grapefruit, raisins, carrot, tomato, cucumber, lettuce, celery.
- Dairy Foods - Milk, Cheese, yogurt

- Protein Foods - meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts¹, pulses

Drinks:

- Water and milk are encouraged. Teachers allow pupils to drink water at their desks throughout the day. In support of the Green Schools initiative and your purse, please use reusable water bottles.
- All-Fruit Smoothies
- Unsweetened Fruit Juice
- Home-made soup.

Food and Drinks no longer encouraged.

Although already in effect in some classrooms, the 'Sweet Treat' Thursdays and Fridays shall be discontinued.

The following are examples of what are considered 'Sweet Treats' due to their high sugar content, artificial sweetener content, high saturated fats or high salt content.

- Chocolate
- Sweets
- Biscuits and cakes
- Cereal breakfast bars (such as 'Rice Krispies' bars)
- Crisps
- Fizzy Drinks
- Fruit Drinks with added sugar or artificial sweetener

On occasion², teachers may give a sweet treat in class.

¹ Nuts – although most nuts are healthy, they do pose a choking hazard and some children are allergic to them. Nut spreads in sandwiches are safe for non-allergic children. However, reiterate to your child that lunchbox items should not be shared with others due to possible allergies.

² Typically, the occasions are Halloween, Christmas, Easter and end of year. Non-food items such as stickers, pencils, erasers, etc. may be given as treats or rewards at the teachers' discretion.