

HEALTHY EATING POLICY - updated in September/October 2015

What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing long term health of school children and staff. The school day provides the opportunity for having at least one of the daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The curriculum provides an opportunity to learn and explore about food and healthy lifestyles. Through these guidelines St. Louis G.N.S aims to help all those involved in our school community, e.g. children, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

1. Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school.
2. A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.
3. Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage include fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (non dessert), plain rice cakes and crackers.
4. Pupils are encouraged to avail of the EU School Milk Scheme (*plain milk only will be offered and all milk cartons will be stored in the refrigerator*). Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage.
5. Pupils are encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
6. Pure unsweetened juices or well diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash: 8 parts water) may be included but only as part of children's main lunch meal.
7. Chewy /sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, nuts, crisps, cereal bars, fizzy drinks and chocolate dips are not permitted. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
8. On special occasions (decided on by the school), non-food related treats are to be encouraged.
9. When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer.
10. Due to special dietary requirements and our healthy eating policy, birthday cakes or party food are not to be shared in the classroom.
11. Nutrition & healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.
12. Teachers and staff will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including providing non-food related rewards.
13. 'Healthy Eating Awareness Days' will be held as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
14. The '*Healthy Eating Guidelines*' will be reviewed every two years and the policy will be visibly displayed in the school.

The main change in this updated version of the policy is that the Friday Treat is to be discontinued. Teachers may, on special occasions, give a small sweet treat.