

Réalt Na Mara National School

Dunmore East, County Waterford



HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Introduction

Healthy Eating Policy of Réalt na Mara outlines healthy eating practices through the promotion of healthy lunches and healthy snacks and by other means. The Social, Personal and Health Education Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of students and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

Réalt na Mara is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them make informed decisions about their food intake. We promote a whole school approach to healthy eating, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life.

The children will receive consistent messages regarding healthy eating both at home and at school.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy

- To explore food preferences in a balanced diet
- To encourage a positive attitude to food
- To promote a healthy diet
- To educate about different foods
- To promote good eating habits
- To encourage children to have a healthy diet
- To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school
- To have a healthy school community

Objectives

1. To enable each child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy.
2. To enable each child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- There are many opportunities in the primary school curriculum for learning about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.
- The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the SPHE curriculum. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body* at each class level and is taught each year. These themes are also dealt with in other subjects such as Science.
- A copy of the healthy food pyramid is on display in every classroom.
- As part of our environmental awareness programme and in keeping with our Green schools status lunches should be packed in recyclable boxes avoiding the use of tin foil, cling film and plastic bags. All litter and uneaten food is to be taken home.
- As part of the school's application to achieve the active flag, children run the daily mile.

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is the best start to your child's day giving him/her the energy needed to concentrate and learn. Research has shown that children benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating breakfast.

Small Break

The children have an exercise break from 11.00-11.10. Food at this break should be easy to eat, ideally a small sandwich or piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

Lunch Break

Children have 10 to 15 minutes to eat at this break. Ideally, children's lunches should be varied and include:

- Two portions from the bread/cereal group

- One portion of meat or meat alternative
- At least one portion from the fruit and vegetable group
- One portion from the dairy group
- Water, milk.

Suggestions for your child's school lunch:

- Breads – whole-grain breads, rolls, bagels, wraps, soda bread or pitta
- Bread substitutes – oatcakes, plain rice cakes, pancakes or crackers
- Fillings – cheese, tuna, hummus, cold meats, pate, egg, lettuce, spinach, cucumber, tomato, onion, peppers, coleslaw, salad, or banana.
- Warm leftovers in a flask – curry, pasta (with or without sauce), soup/chowder, baked beans, rice, stew, lasagne or noodles-Parents are responsible for the temperature of the food, it is of paramount importance that it would not scald or burn your child or another children in the class.
- Cold leftovers
- Fruit – apple, oranges, banana, grapes, pear, plum, peach, apricots, melon, grapefruit, pineapple, strawberries, raspberries, mango, blackberries or blueberries. Remember to peel and/or cut fruit and vegetables into bite-sized pieces for younger children
- Raw vegetables – tomatoes, sweet corn, peppers, carrot sticks, celery sticks, broccoli, cabbage or cucumber

Food items not permitted in school:

Nuts (including peanut butter)

Chocolate spread (including Nutella)

Fizzy drinks, sports drinks and drinks/juices with high sugar content

Chewing gum

Chocolate (including chocolate spread)

Sweets & winders

Crisps

Biscuits/cakes/muffins/traybakes

Cereal Bars

Special Treats

Children are permitted to bring one **small** treat on a Friday (A treat size chocolate bar or a treat size bag of jellies)

On specific days during the school year the children will be permitted special treats:

- End of term parties
- School Trips

Allergies

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or guardians of children who are on special diets for medical reasons, or who have allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided. This information will be relayed to all staff.

There is a total ban on nuts and nut products due to the serious allergies of some pupils. They cannot be permitted on any occasion.

Best Practice

- Ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast
- Eat small regular meals, not one big meal each day
- Children who take physical exercise each day will have a better appetite for healthy food
- Serve brown bread instead of white
- Cut large rolls/wraps/sandwiches into more manageable sizes

Roles and Responsibilities:

Role of Parents:

- Provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children
- Encourage healthy eating
- Inform the school of any child's special dietary needs

Role of Children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy
- Not to bring chocolate bars or sweets to school except on treat days.

Role of School Staff

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the SPHE and Science curricula.

Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review. In accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in Réalt na Mara National School, it will be reviewed initially after one year and then every three years, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.

Signed:

Thomas C. Rogers P.P.

Date: 25th January 2022