

## **Scoil Mhuire Healthy Eating Lunch Policy**

### **Introductory Statement:**

This Healthy Lunch Policy was drafted as a review of our initial policy introduced in 2007 and has involved consultation with the pupils, parents and staff of Scoil Mhuire. The introduction of our Healthy Eating Lunch Policy created an awareness of the importance of good nutrition for pupils throughout their school day and has positively influenced the quality of daily lunches brought by our pupils. However, it is now time to refine some elements of our original policy and to bring it up to date in line with new findings and research and also the introduction of a revised food pyramid.

### **Rationale:**

Healthy eating in childhood:

- Can help improve performance in class and at play.
- Can help improve concentration.
- Meets children's nutrient requirements for growth and development.
- Encourages good eating habits for life.

### **Aim:**

- We aim to ensure that the food and drinks included in childrens' school lunches promote the health and well-being of all pupils in Scoil Mhuire.

### **Objectives:**

- It is our goal to encourage healthy choices when preparing children's lunches, considering optimum nutrition for their school day.
- We wish to promote a positive attitude to food and that all foods have a place in a balanced diet.
- Healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products are foods to be enjoyed as part of a balanced diet and to maintain concentration and focus throughout the school day.

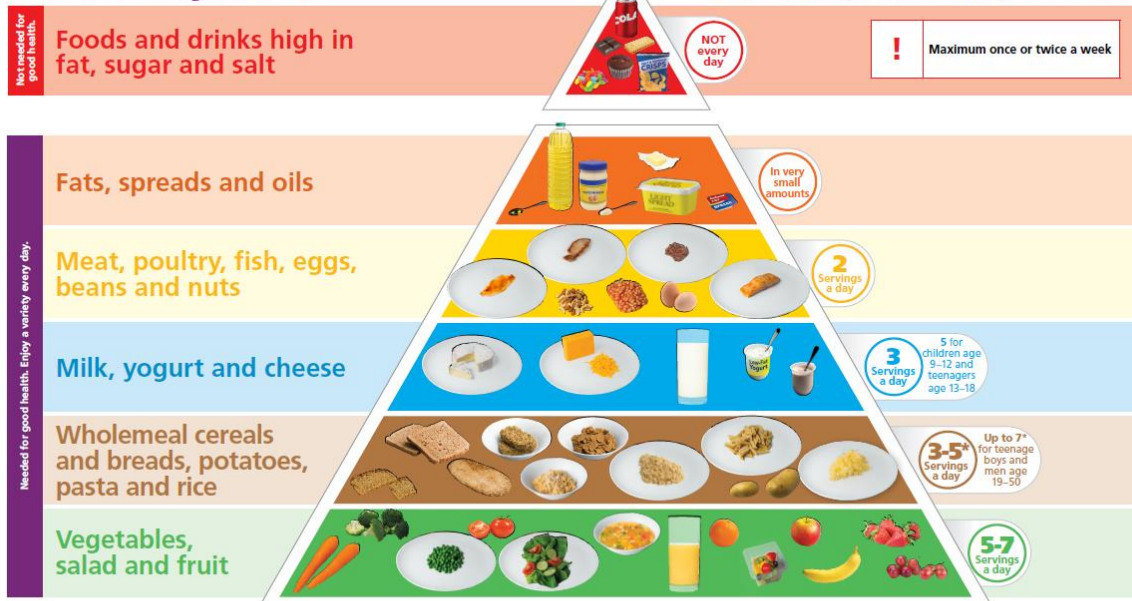
### **Guidelines for a Healthy School Lunch**

The policy provides guidelines and recommendations in accordance with the most recent food pyramid so that informed choices are made when deciding which foods to include when making balanced, nutritional lunches for children.

A healthy school lunch box should contain servings from each of the shelves of The Food Pyramid as outlined below:

## The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



\*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5-10)	Teenager (11-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (11-18)	Adult (19-50)	Adult (51+)
	3-4	4	4-5	3-4		3	3-4	3
3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-6	4	

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Source: Department of Health, December 2016.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day – water is best

**Get Active!**  
To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Children are asked to bring a healthy lunch and drink to school each day in accordance with the school's Healthy Eating Policy. We emphasize a positive attitude towards healthy eating, conscious of the fact that good habits are formed early in a child's life.

Some healthy drink and snack suggestions we encourage are provided on the link below:

[www.safefood.eu/Education/Primary-\(ROI\)/Healthy-lunchboxes.aspx](http://www.safefood.eu/Education/Primary-(ROI)/Healthy-lunchboxes.aspx)

The following food items are **not permitted** in childrens' lunches in Scoil Mhuire:

- Sweets
- Crisps
- Fizzy Drinks
- Biscuits (all varieties)
- Chocolate and all products containing chocolate such as spreads, yoghurts and bars.
- Cakes, buns and any other sweet baking items
- Cereal bars (due to high sugar content)
- Nuts (see note on allergies)

**NB. Allergies:** Due to a number of severe allergies to nuts in the school all nuts and related products are prohibited on the school premises. This includes spreads that contain nuts such as peanut butter.

If your child has a particular feeding routine, special dietary requirements or food allergies, you must bring this to the attention of the school and your child's teacher as a matter of urgency.

**Treat Days:** Sweet treats are only allowed to be brought in on special occasions at the discretion of the class teacher or school. Other rewards such as stickers, no homework, extra PE/break-time etc. are encouraged as a more appropriate reward system. While sweet treats are permitted on some occasions or outings, healthy choices are always encouraged.

Also, birthday treats such as cakes, sweets and other items should be kept for celebrations outside of school.

**Education:** In conjunction with the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum, children in Scoil Mhuire will receive a number of lessons on Healthy Eating at the start of each school year. This will serve as a reminder of school policy, the food pyramid, food labelling, sugar, salt and fat facts, portion size, making lunch ideas etc. so that they are informed of the components of a healthy, balanced diet. It will also include some activities to involve children in active learning in relation to what they are eating e.g. What's in your cereal or other food items and also some media and advertising education in relation to food.

Each class teacher is supplied with a **Healthy Eating Folder** with resources to inform and guide them in the implementation of this policy in their class, in a positive manner.

**Other initiatives that support this policy:**

**Green Schools:** To decrease packaging and litter we recommend bringing a lunch box for food and a screw top bottle for drinks.

**School Garden:** By becoming involved in actively planting foods such as vegetables, fruit or herbs children develop an understanding and curiosity about foods that will hopefully become part of their diet for life. Junior and senior pupils in Scoil Mhuire take part in initiatives such as Sow and Grow and The Incredible Edibles projects in spring-time.

**Other:** From time to time some of the following may be included as part of our education in this area, for example, The Food Dudes Programme, Healthy Eating Day/Week, Fruit days, displays and possible visits from a dentist, doctor, nurse or dietician in the community to speak to the children.

**Roles and responsibilities:**

- **Pupils:** Pupils are made aware of and must adhere to recommendations outlined in this policy.
- **Parents:** Parents will make informed decisions when making choices for school lunches by referring to the policy and communicating decisions to their children.
- **Teachers:** Teachers will educate pupils in the components of a healthy diet so that they see the importance of having a healthy lunch policy that meets the needs of all pupils in Scoil Mhuire. They will also encourage and monitor the class to ensure all aspects of policy are implemented and upheld. They will allow adequate time for children to eat their lunch and praise healthy choices.
- **Community:** It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to uphold and encourage healthy choices for children at school.
- **Promotion:** This policy will be promoted through its availability to parents, teachers and community on our school website. Information leaflets with lunch ideas will be given to each family. It will also be promoted through positive communication to pupils from parents and teachers.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation/Review:**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and amended as deemed necessary.

#### **Some useful websites for reference:**

- [www.safefood.eu/Healthy-lunchboxes](http://www.safefood.eu/Healthy-lunchboxes)
- [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)
- [www.littlesteps.eu](http://www.littlesteps.eu)
- [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie)
- [www.irishheart.ie](http://www.irishheart.ie)
- [www.ndc.ie](http://www.ndc.ie)
- [www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)
- [www.irishhealth.com](http://www.irishhealth.com)
- [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)
- [www.dentist.ie](http://www.dentist.ie)
- [www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)
- [www.walktall.ie](http://www.walktall.ie)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ ( SPHE Coordinator)

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