



HEALTHY EATING POLICY

SCHOOL: Gort National School
ADDRESS: Gort, Co. Galway
CATEGORY: Fourteen Teacher School
TELEPHONE NO.: 091- 631627

INTRODUCTION:

“Children’s eating habits will strongly influence their chances of living a healthy life-style”. Our healthy eating policy is intended to encourage children to get into good dietary habits. Children need a diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. As parents and teachers, we are all very conscious of the importance of our children’s diet and how it can impact on their health, development and well-being. *Each day should start with a healthy breakfast.* Children spend a significant part of their day in school and it’s very important that we encourage them to eat healthily during that time. The successful implementation of this Healthy Eating Policy is an important step in promoting a healthy lifestyle for our children.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL:

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 and we realise that health of mind and body is very important for all our pupils.

RATIONALE:

Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community: children, families and teachers. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. Healthy Eating & Living is considered to be an important element of the SPHE, PE and Science Curriculum of our school. In our school the children eat twice a day, before going out to play and at lunch time.

AIMS:

- ❖ To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet
- ❖ To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition
- ❖ To raise levels of concentration within class by way of consumption of healthy food
- ❖ To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre- prepared food, juice cartons etc.
- ❖ To help develop a positive lifelong attitude towards healthy eating
- ❖ To instill in pupils the notion that the combination of a healthy lifestyle, which includes healthy eating, exercising and getting enough sleep assists pupils in reaching their academic potential

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- ❖ To help children realize that eating habits formed at this early stage tend to stay with children throughout their lives
- ❖ To promote the concept that a combination of healthy eating and being active guards against obesity and the onset of certain illnesses

PROMOTION OF THE POLICY:

- ❖ All members of the teaching staff promote this policy through regular verbal reminders and good example to the children.
- ❖ *If children bring "discouraged" food / drinks to school:* - They will be allowed to eat/drink them but warned not to bring them on other days. If they persist in bringing unhealthy food to school, the teacher will inform parents re Healthy Eating Policy throughout the school.

EXCEPTIONS:

- ❖ Exceptions are allowed:
 - End of term
 - School trips
 - School events – concerts, matches etc.
 - Friday treat

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
- ❖ Positive feedback from parents/guardians and school staff
- ❖ An improved level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom
- ❖ When the “healthier choice is the easier choice”

HEALTHY LUNCHES

Monday to Thursday

- ❖ **First Break:** A piece of fruit (peeled and cut for small children) and some of the child’s drink
- ❖ **Lunch Break:** A nutritious Lunch consisting of:
 1. Brown bread or Sandwich or Wrap or Crackers filled with meat or cheese or other healthy filling
 2. Piece of Fruit (peeled and cut for small children)
 3. Healthy Drink: Water or Pure Fruit Juice or diluted sugar-free Squash



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Friday a special treat day

We all enjoy a treat from time to time. To encourage the children to abide by this healthy lunch campaign children may bring one item from the list below in addition to a nutritious lunch on a Friday.

- Home baking treat
- A snack bar
- 2/3 biscuits

The Following items should never be included in school lunches:

- Popcorn, Crisps and all related products, e.g. Snax, Wheelies, Pringles
- Fizzy drinks
- Chocolate eggs/crème eggs/chocolate bars, winders and similar products
- Cereal bars: (many of these cereal bars can contain up to 40% sugar and 30% fat)
- Nuts (due to concerns about choking and allergy)

(Children with special dietary requirements and/or allergies will at all times be facilitated to choose foods to suit their own individual requirements. Parents should discuss this with the class teacher)

To support our Healthy Lunch Campaign the children will receive lessons on healthy eating through the SPHE programme during the school year.

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 monitor the children's lunches, to encourage the children to develop healthy eating habits and to give children input on healthy eating through SESE & PE
- ❖ The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, children –will work together to promote the progress of this policy.
- ❖ The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by Teachers and the BOM.

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

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

Fr. Gearóid Ó Gríofa (Chairperson Board of Management)