

Healthy Eating Policy –Gaelscoil Lorgan

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 Gaelscoil Lorgan 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. Children will be encouraged to eat their fruit and vegetables at the small break.
4. All pupils are encouraged to bring plain milk to school. 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. Children may bring 2 bottles of water if they find they are without water before the end of the day. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
6. Chocolate spreads, chocolate/cheese dips, chocolate drinks, any food with chocolate, chewy/sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, nuts, crisps, cereal bars, fizzy drinks and juice drinks are not permitted. In keeping with the Green Schools Initiative, which address reducing litter and hence protecting the school environment, foods which have wrappers/ tin foil or plastic are to be kept to a minimum and put back into their lunchboxes to be brought home and disposed of.
7. Due to the incidence of severe allergic reaction to peanuts and mixed nuts amongst some pupils, we ask you to be vigilant in the following:
 - Avoid peanuts or any other type of nut in school lunches.
 - Avoid giving peanut butter sandwiches, chocolate spreads, nut based breads and cereal bars or any food labelled 'may contain nut traces' in school lunches.
 - Ask children not to share their lunches.

- If your child has eaten peanuts/ nuts before coming to school, please be sure your child's hands and face have been thoroughly washed before entering school.
8. Sweets and treats are not permitted in the school. However, on special occasions decided upon by the class teacher and principal, treats may be provided as a form of celebration. Occasions such as these include Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Summer Holidays. Any occasion where a class teacher would like to have treats in their class will be discussed with the principal and will be kept within their classroom. However, teachers are encouraged to use non-food related treats as a form of reward or celebration in the class.
 9. When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer.
 10. Sweet treats for birthdays such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc should **not** be brought into school as in the school setting, there may be so many birthdays that sweet treats are available nearly every day.
 11. Nutrition and healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.
 12. Teachers and staff will support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including providing non-food related rewards.
 13. 'Healthy Eating Awareness Days' will be held each term 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.