



Healthy Eating Policy

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The original policy was formulated by the staff of Vicarstown NS in 2006. This policy was reviewed in March 2017 in consultation with staff, parents and the Board of Management.

Mission statement.

1. Vicarstown National School, through these guidelines, aims to help all those involved in our school community, children, staff and parents, to develop positive attitudes to eating and healthy living. We wish to promote 'the personal development and well being of the child and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects'. (SPHE Guidelines)
2. The purpose of making healthy food choices enables children to attain their optimum growth, development and health potential.
3. Through a whole school approach, and within the context of SPHE the children, parents and staff will learn about nutrition, healthy eating and healthy living.
4. Our healthy eating guidelines hope to enable the children to develop and understand of healthy living, and an ability to implement healthy behaviour and willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health. This includes physical activity.
5. All classes will receive a least 1 lesson on healthy eating each term.
6. School staff will provide supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
7. We will also hold a Healthy Eating Awareness week annually.
8. Parents will be supported in their role as Primary Educators by providing them with up to date information on healthy eating habits from the Dept. of Health.

Guidelines.

A healthy lunch box includes:

1. At least 2 portions from the bread, cereals group.
2. One portion from the meat and the meat alternatives group.
3. 2/3 portions from fruits and vegetables.
4. One portion from the dairy products.
5. The following foods **do not support** a healthy lunch policy and should be **excluded** from your child's lunch box; crisps, chewing gum, sweets, bars including cereal bars, cakes, biscuits, lollipops, chocolate, chocolate spread, wafers, pretzels, chocolate yogurts and deserts, rice pudding,
6. A small treat is allowed on Wednesdays. This should only be a small item such as a mini chocolate bar, a small pack of sweets, a small slice of cake, a mini muffin etc. Large bags of sweets for sharing are not allowed except for special party occasions.
7. Children are not allowed to bring chewing gum or crisps to school.

Healthy snack options (Lower in sugar and fat)

Sometimes it can be difficult to think of alternatives to these. Here are some tasty alternatives.

- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, pepper and cucumber.
- Washed, raw vegetables (for example, cherry tomatoes)
- Small tin of fruit (in its own juice)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Plain rice cakes (not chocolate flavoured)
- Natural or low fat yogurt with fresh fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned in its own juice)
- Wholemeal or plain scones.
- Sugar-free jelly pots or fruit jelly.
- Raisins
- Pasta or rice
- Cheese
- Hummus
- Olives

Healthy choices of drink include water, milk and unsweetened juice. Children should be encouraged to use re-useable containers for safety and litter reasons. Cans and glass bottles are not permitted. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

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
- To implement school policy by not allowing their children to bring foods not allowed in Vicarstown N.S.

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 chewing gum or crisps to school on any occasion.

Role of School:

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- If children bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars or sweets to school they will not be allowed to eat them while in school. .

Implementation:

If children bring prohibited food or drink to school they will be asked to put it away until after school.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher will speak to the parents and remind them of the healthy eating policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines.

A copy of *The Healthy Food Pyramid* will be on display in every classroom and will be referred to regularly.

As part of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum reasons for healthy eating will be discussed with the children regularly by staff.

Teachers will continue to give children a sweet treat on occasions in recognition of work done, improvements in work or behaviour and in an effort to promote positive behaviour. Sweet treats used prudently by teachers will not interfere with the health of the children. However teachers will also make use of alternative rewards and prizes such as stickers, raffle tickets etc.

Exceptions to the healthy eating guidelines may be made on the following occasions

End of term parties

Celebrations following communion and confirmation

School tours

The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the BOM.

Timeframe for Implementation.

May 2017

Timeframe for review

Sept. 2019

Ratification and communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)