



**Ardnagrath National School**  
**Ardnagrath**  
**Co. Westmeath**

Website ardnagrathns.ie  
E-mail ardnagrathns20@gmail.com  
Roll No 18764H

**Healthy Eating Policy** (updated September 2023)

***At the onset, it is important to note that nuts or foods of any kind containing nuts or nut traces are not allowed in school***

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition, the Physical Education programme supports the physical development and fitness of the children. The Science curriculum also looks at the development of the body and deepens the children's understanding of how the body grows and develops.

**Aims of this policy:**

- To promote the personal development and well-being of the child.
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.
- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing, developing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre. In our school the children eat twice a day. To ensure good concentration it is important for children to drink lots of water, so please encourage your child to bring a large bottle of water.

**The Healthy Lunch Guidelines**

Following a survey with parents (January 2023), discussion with children in the school and consulting information from the HSE the following guidelines emerged:

### **What is a healthy lunch?**

- It is full of goodness like protein, vitamins and calcium.
- Contains food that is low in sugar
- Contains little or no colouring or additives.
- Gives strength and energy
- Makes us fit and healthy
- Helps our brain power

### **What could be in a healthy lunch?**

Sandwiches or rolls with cheese, meat or other fillings.

Pitta bread, crackers

Fruit (peeled and chopped for small children)

Raisins and yogurts (without chocolate)

Vegetables (washed and chopped)

Pasta and rice

Salad

Croissants and rice cakes without chocolate

### **What will NOT be part of a healthy lunch in our school?**

- Crisps, salted nuts or popcorn
- Chocolate, sweets, lollipops or jellies
- Chewing gum
- Cake, buns, biscuits, pastries or doughnuts
- Chocolate spread and Nutella
- Fizzy drinks and energy drinks
- Flavoured milk

Fruit Winders

Jelly tub

**If such foods are brought to school, children will be asked to bring them home in their lunchboxes.**

### **Can we have treats in our school?**

Yes, one day a week, on Friday. Friday will be our treat day. The children are encouraged to eat the treat AFTER their lunch is eaten at the 12.30pm break. On this day, children can bring ONE of the following: Treat/ fun sized bar (not containing nuts or nut traces), treat/ fun sized bag of sweets, small biscuit, small cereal bar, small home bakes (bun or slice of cake), jelly tub.

### **What drinks could we include in a healthy lunch?**

- Water
- Fruit juices (non sweetened)
- Milk

- Actimel
- Smoothies

**What drinks should not be allowed?**

- Fizzy drinks
- Sugary drinks
- Energy Drinks

**Should we make exceptions for special occasions?**

- Yes, for treats after communion or confirmation
- Yes, for end of term parties at Halloween, Christmas and Easter
- Yes, for school trips and after swimming
- No, we cannot have children’s birthday parties in school.

Teacher’s and SNA’s may give small treats as rewards now and again but will try to keep these to a minimum and if possible to Fridays only.

**Curriculum/Education**

- 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 will be on display in every classroom. A Healthy Eating Week will be held annually in the first term
- 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 where possible. All litter and uneaten food is to be taken home.

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:

|                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Fats Sugar                   | Sparingly Sweets etc. |
| Meat, Fish<br>Peas/Beans     | 2 portions per day    |
| Milk, Cheese<br>Yoghurt      | 3+ portions per day   |
| Fruit & Vegetables           | 4+ portions per day   |
| Bread, Cereals &<br>Potatoes | 6+ portions per day   |

The following guide is designed to help parents provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunch ideas for our children:

| Bread & Alternatives              | Savouries                            |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bread or rolls (preferably whole- | Lean Meat (e.g. chicken/turkey, ham) |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| meal, whole-grain or whole- wheat varieties)<br>Wraps Pitta bread<br>Bread sticks<br>Rice – wholegrain Pasta – wholegrain Wholemeal Scones/ Crackers.  | Eggs<br>Tinned Fish eg tuna/sardines/salmon<br>Potato Salad<br>Hummus<br><b>Drinks</b><br>Water or Milk are the ideal choice Fruit juices - <i>without added sugar. Pure fruit juice also contains natural sugar and should be diluted with water</i> )<br>Yoghurt |
| <b>Fruit &amp; Vegetables</b><br>Apples, Banana, Peach Mandarins, Plums<br>Orange segments<br>Fruit Salad, dried fruit<br>Pineapple cubes Grapes<br>Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Tomato<br>Pepper slices<br>Carrot stick | <b>Dairy</b><br>Milk<br>Natural Yoghurt<br>Cheese (triangles/slices/ small blocks of cheddar/gouda/edam etc)   |

Pupils should be encouraged to have a role in preparing their own lunches and meals in order to promote responsibility or their own health and nutrition.

### Allergies

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers 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 all nuts and all nut products due to serious allergies of some pupils.**

### 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 chocolate bars, cakes, buns or sweets to school except on treat day.

#### 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, cakes buns 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 curriculum.

#### Useful information

Please see below a number of links with further information and advice on healthy school lunches, as well as many recipes which can be used at home and for school lunches. **Please note, any recipes which contain nuts are not allow to be brought in to the school due to serious allergies of some pupils**

<https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/healthy-lunchboxes.pdf>

<https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>

<https://www.freshforkids.com.au/all-recipes/spring-recipes.html>

<https://www.freshforkids.com.au/all-recipes/winter-recipes.html>

<https://www.freshforkids.com.au/all-recipes/autumn-recipes.html>

<https://www.freshforkids.com.au/all-recipes/summer-recipes.html>

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/10-healthy-lunch-ideas-kids>

Happy eating to all ☺

**Review:** The policy will be reviewed and updated on an on-going basis.

**Ratification:**

Approved by the Board of Management on ...../...../ 20

Signature ..... (Board of Management) ...../...../ 20

Signed ..... (Principal) ...../...../ 20

