



**St. Brigid's B.N.S.**  
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### **Healthy Eating Policy**

At St. Brigid's BNS, Killester we endeavour to make children aware of the need for healthy food in their diets. It has been found that education and food are fundamental conditions for health. This is reinforced through the subjects Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (J.1 – 6<sup>th</sup> class) and Science (3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> class). The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) highlights the importance of healthy eating. Here it is claimed that:

*children who care for and respect themselves are more likely to treat their own bodies with dignity and be more particular about their lifestyle choices, both now and in the future*

The prevalence of obesity in children has been rising rapidly, leading to many serious health consequences worldwide. The WHO Regional Office for Europe issued recommendations and guidelines for regular collection of data on weight in children worldwide in order to monitor prevalence trends of growth, overweight and obesity. The Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative was established as a result. They conducted a study which was completed in October 2020. The report claimed that one in five (20%) Irish children are either overweight or obese.

Research from the World Health Organisation (WHO) finds that schools are an ideal setting to promote health and healthy eating because:

- Schools reach a high proportion of children, and indirectly reach their families
- Schools provide opportunities to practise healthy eating and food safety
- Schools can teach students how to resist unhealthy pressures since eating is a socially learned behaviour influenced heavily by peers

- Evaluations show that school-based nutrition education can improve eating behaviours of young children

Healthy nutrition improves educational potential. In fact, studies by WHO show that children who have good nutritional status score higher in factual based tests than children who do not have good diets (1998, 2021).

### **Aims of St. Brigid's Healthy Eating Policy**

- To promote the personal development and wellbeing of the child
- To enable the child to make informed decisions and choices about healthy eating both now and in the future
- To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in the future
- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy

### **Objectives of St. Brigid's Healthy Eating Policy**

- To positively affect healthy eating among children
- To enable the child to take personal responsibility for making wise food choices
- To raise the levels of concentration of the pupils through eating healthy food
- To protect the health of children with serious food allergies

### **Healthy Lunches**

Parents are the main contributors to the nutritional education of their children. They provide the environments in which children make food choices.

A healthy lunch is one that helps to maintain good health in children and improve their concentration. It should include a variety of food from the food pyramid. Here are some healthy snacks that we encourage:

- Fruit (pre-chopped or pre-peeled - apples, bananas, grapes, pineapple chunks, orange segments, plums etc.)
- Raw vegetables (chopped up carrots, peppers, sweet corn, celery etc.)
- Salads (coleslaw, potato salad, cucumber, tomatoes etc.)
- Hard boiled eggs
- Tinned Fish – e.g. Tuna, Salmon
- Cheese
- Bread, Rolls, Scones preferably wholemeal
- Pitta bread, Bagel, Tortilla Wrap
- Rice, Pasta, Couscous, Hummus
- Lean Meat- Chicken and Turkey (preferably unprocessed)

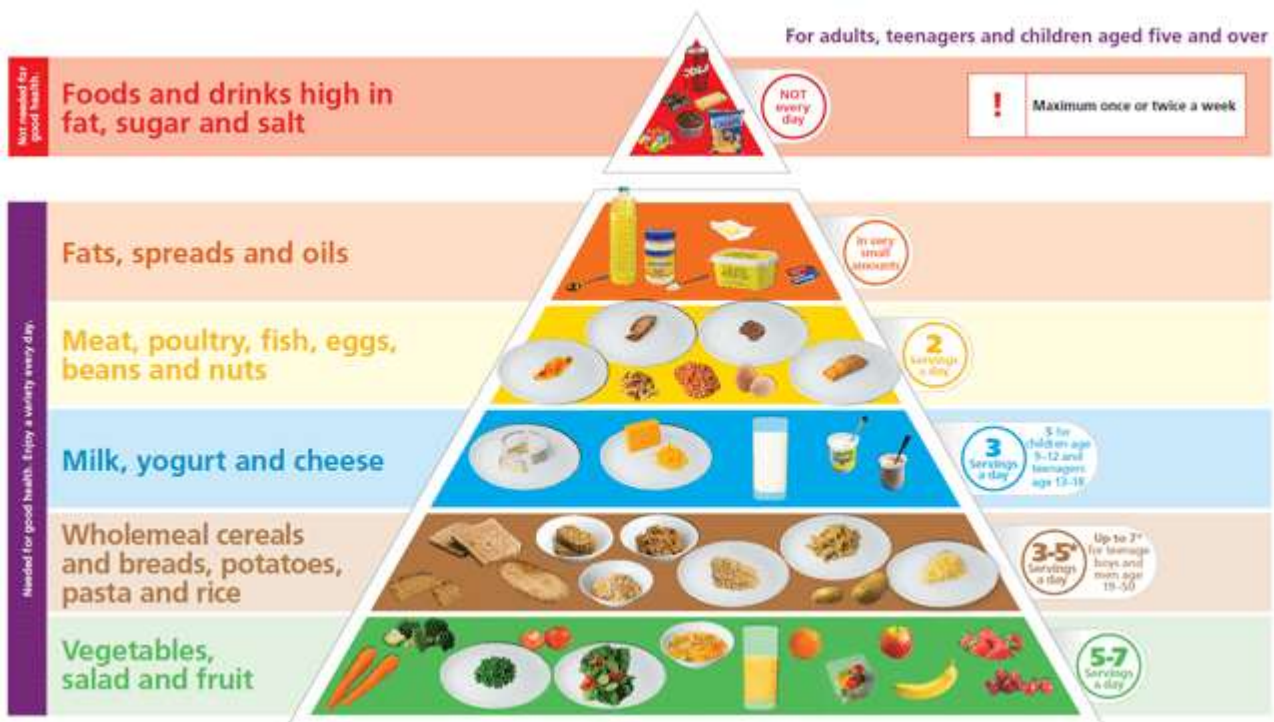
The children are also encouraged to bring at least two pieces of fruit/vegetable to school daily. One piece of fruit/vegetable will be eaten at 'Fruit snack', which is a short snack break during the day.

### **Food Dudes**

The children are encouraged to take part in the Healthy Eating Programme entitled 'Food Dudes' whenever it is offered to the school.

Food Dudes is a programme developed to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables in school and at home. It comprises of positive role models, repeated tastings and rewards. It is managed by Bord Bia and funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine. All elements of Food Dudes are free of charge.

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



### Drinks

Growing children should get approximately 600ml milk a day or its equivalent as cheese or other dairy produce. This amount of dairy ensures that the children get enough calcium which is essential for developing healthy bones and teeth. Milk is delivered daily, refrigerated and free. As such the children should be actively encouraged to drink a carton of milk during lunch every day.

The children should also be encouraged to bring water to school. There are also water fountains in every classroom. If a child does not like water or milk they may bring in fruit juice, but we urge parents to read the labels carefully as they may have added sugars and sweeteners.

### Foods Not Allowed in School

Highly processed foods and convenient snacks can have large amounts of sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives. Children will often ask for treats and

sweets. In order to support parents, the following items are not allowed in school.

This list is not exhaustive:

- Nuts & Nut Products
- Crisps, Pop-corn
- Fizzy Drinks
- Chocolate bars, biscuits, spreads
- Muffins, Cakes, Cereal Bars
- Chewing Gum
- Sweets, Lollipops

**Nuts and nut products are strictly prohibited.** Due to the incidence of **nut allergies** amongst our pupils, we ask parents to be vigilant while preparing lunches. Even minor traces of nuts could trigger serious allergic reactions for a child which would necessitate emergency treatment.

Yoghurt, yoghurt drinks, frubes etc. are not permitted in school due to the mess they cause.

In order to facilitate the full implementation of this healthy eating policy the staff at St. Brigid's BNS agree not to give sweet treats as prizes to our students except on special occasions. Instead the staff will give prizes such as stickers, certificates, pencils, rubbers etc.

*Rules may be relaxed for special occasions, such as class parties, school tours etc.*

### **Food Allergies**

Due to the number of children with food allergies in our school, children are not allowed to share their lunches or drinks. We request that parents do not send in cakes, biscuits or treats to be shared within class.

If a child has a food allergy the school should be notified in writing as soon as possible. A list of possible implications and a list of prohibited foods must be

provided along with a full plan of what would be required should a child need medical attention due to an allergic reaction.

If this allergy necessitates administration of medicine as prescribed by a doctor, an Administration of Medicine Form must be filled in. This form will be kept in the child's file and all teachers and staff will be notified of these allergies.

If a child has a severe food allergy, it may be necessary to place a restriction on a particular class with regard to the types of food allowed. In these cases parents in the class will be notified in writing.

### **Green Flag School**

Children are encouraged to bring their lunch to school in a lunch box which can be washed out and reused routinely. Small plastic recyclable water bottles with twistable lids are ideal for water. Glass bottles and cans are not allowed for safety reasons.

We are a green flag school and as such children are asked to take all their uneaten food, their food wrappings and cartons home in their lunch boxes. This also gives parents an opportunity to see exactly what food their child has eaten that day.

### **Useful Websites for Health Promotion:**

[www.healthyyireland.ie](http://www.healthyyireland.ie)

[www.healthyfoodforall.com/schools](http://www.healthyfoodforall.com/schools)

[www.dohc.ie/publications/nutrition/food](http://www.dohc.ie/publications/nutrition/food)

[www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net)

[www.bordbia.ie](http://www.bordbia.ie)

[www.nutritondetectives.com](http://www.nutritondetectives.com)

[www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)

***Implementation***

This policy will be revised by the whole school community including:

The Staff

The Parent Body

The Board of Management

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Signed: *Seán Moran*  
Chairperson of the BOM

Date: *24<sup>th</sup> November 2021*