

St. Fintan's NS. Sutton Healthy Eating Policy



Introduction:

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme at St. Fintan's NS, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their diet. Our Healthy Eating Policy outlines how the school supports healthy eating practices through the promotion of healthy lunches and healthy snacks and by other means. The SPHE Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

St. Fintan's NS is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g. a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lessens the risk of diabetes. A low salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life).

To promote healthy eating habits in our school, we follow a healthy eating policy.

Aims:

To promote a whole school approach to healthy eating and nutrition

- To understand the benefit of a healthy well balanced diet
- To develop an awareness that good eating habits formed in early childhood influence health and wellbeing throughout our lives
- To develop awareness of the importance of food for growth and development
- To explore food preferences in a balanced diet

Objectives:

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

School Meals Programme:

St. Fintan's NS participates in the School Hot Meals Programme which means that all children attending the school receive a hot lunch in school. This programme is funded by the Department of Social Protection and follows the national Healthy Eating Guidelines. The guidelines outline that there must be healthy and balanced choices for each meal, which align with the revised food pyramid and guidelines. Certain foods and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar are not offered to children. The guidelines also emphasise that milk and water are the best drinks to serve children.

Children and their parents must choose a hot meal, lunch option for each day of the week. They will also receive a piece of fruit. There is a huge choice available on the menu and it caters for all dietary needs e.g. gluten free, vegetarian and vegan. Parents will provide their child with a healthy, nut free snack each day.

Treats:

St. Fintan's NS recognises that treats are really enjoyed by children and that they can be given on certain occasions.

At the discretion of the teacher, foods from the top tier of the food pyramid may be given to children for special events and celebrations but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "every day food". Generally these days will be the start of a holiday period and the days the class is on tour.

Wellbeing

The purpose of the whole policy, as outlined above, is to provide for the physical wellbeing of the children attending St. Fintan's NS through healthy eating. This also impacts on the wellbeing of the whole child and their performance within school.

Allergies/Special dietary needs

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.

As a consequence of this, food materials for birthdays cannot be accommodated in the school.

If your child has any other special dietary needs outside of those referred to in this policy please contact the principal.

There is a total ban on nuts and nut products in our school due to serious allergies of some pupils. Parents & children will be made aware of this at the start of each school year.

Drinks Allowed

- Milk
- Water
- Juice or Smoothie
- Yoghurt

Foods Not permitted in your child's lunchbox for the snack:

- Crisps
- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Fizzy drinks
- Nuts
- Nutritional cereal bars (these can contain nuts and large amounts of sugar)
- Chewing gum or bubble gum
- Hot drinks (due to children bringing in boiling water)

If in doubt leave it out.


Reducing Waste in Our School:

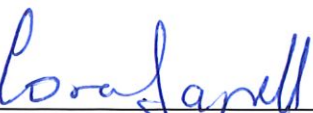
To reduce the amount of landfill rubbish that our school produces, the children in St. Fintan's NS are asked to bring wrappers from their snack home in their lunch boxes. Our hot food provider provides large compost bins which reduces food waste. We try our best to recycle any other waste appropriately, and each class is given recycling and black bins to allow for this.

Monitoring/Evaluation/Review:

This policy was devised by staff, and the Board of Management in April 2024.

It was amended and approved by the Board Of Management on 22nd April 2024.

Signed:  Chairperson

Signed:  Principal

Date: 