

Healthy Eating Policy



Lurga National School
Gort,
Co Galway

LURGA N.S. HEALTHY EATING POLICY

1. Introduction

The introduction of our Healthy Eating Policy created an awareness of the importance of good nutrition for pupils throughout their school day and has positively influenced the quality of daily lunches brought by our pupils. Lurga NS is committed to facilitating our pupils' development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. As a school, we believe that key adults in their lives, namely parents/guardians and school staff, should be good role models and support them in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general wellbeing.

2. Aims of Our Healthy Eating Policy

The aims of our healthy eating policy are:

- 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 raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food
- To provide members of staff, parents/guardians and those involved in school activities with clear information.

3. Benefits of a Good Diet

A good diet:

- Ensures the development of healthy hair, skin, teeth, muscles and strong bones
- Provides energy and aids concentration
- Strengthens the immune system.

4. School Actions which Support Our Healthy Eating Policy

As a school, we will implement the following actions to support our Healthy Eating Policy:

- A Healthy Eating Awareness Week will take place annually.
- SPHE lessons on healthy eating will be planned and implemented across all year groups at the same time each year.
- The School Lunch Provider will be invited into the school, when possible, to show pupils samples of the range of foods available and provide opportunities to taste the different

foods.

- The School Lunch Provider will adhere to the required Healthy Ireland Nutrition Standards for School Meals.
- Sweets and/or food treats will not be used as daily rewards by teachers.

5. Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is the best start to a child's day giving him/her the energy needed to concentrate and learn. Research has shown that children benefit both nutritionally and behaviourally by eating breakfast.

6. Break/Lunchtime Guidelines

In order to promote the health and safety of all children in the school and prevent the spread of infection, guidelines for eating at lunch and break times are necessary.

- Pupils should not share their food or drink.
- Pupils should not share food utensils or drinks containers.
- Pupils should eat their food at their own table.
- Any uneaten food should go back into the pupil's lunch box. This will help the parent/guardian to be aware of what their child is actually eating.
- All recycling/rubbish should be taken home.

7. Morning Break

There is one morning break time. Pupils have approximately 5 minutes to eat at their morning break. Food at this break should be easy to eat, ideally a small sandwich or a piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

8. Lunch Break

Pupils have approximately 10 minutes to eat their lunch.

A healthy lunchbox should contain:

- At least one portion of fruit/vegetables
- One portion of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans or nuts
- One portion of bread or cereal
- One portion of dairy
- Milk or water.

Please see table below for lunchbox ideas:

Vegetables, Salad & Fruit 5+ portions per day	Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Beans & Nuts 2+ portions per day	Cereals, Breads, Potatoes, Pasta & Rice 4+ portions per day	Milk, Yogurt & Cheese 3+ portions per day
1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar size fruit 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or similar size fruit. Half a tin of fruit in its own juice Handful of dried fruit 1 small bunch of grapes Chopped vegetables, e.g. cucumber, carrot, celery	2 slices of cooked meat 1 to 2 hardboiled eggs Small can of tuna, salmon, sardines or mackerel 4 tablespoons of hummus	2 thin slices of wholemeal bread 1 small bread roll 1 tortilla wrap 1 pitta bread 4 to 6 crackers or breadsticks 1 cup of cooked rice or pasta or couscous 1 small bagel	1 pot of yogurt or custard 2 cheese triangles 2 thumbs of cheese

All pupils should bring a refillable water bottle to school every day. Pupils will be allowed access to water throughout the school day and can refill their bottles when needed.

Every child in Lurga NS has access to a free school lunch under the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection’s Hot School Meals Programme. This lunch is provided by an external Lunch Provider. Parents/guardians and children can choose their lunch menu online. Lunch menus are set up to encourage variety. If pupils are availing of this lunch scheme, they may choose to send in extra lunch depending on your child.

9. Foods Not Permitted in Lurga NS

The following foods do not support our healthy lunch policy and should be excluded from your child's lunch box:

- Fizzy drinks, sports drinks and drinks or juices with high sugar content
- Take away food or hot deli food
- Chewing gum
- Sweets & winders
- Crisps & sweetened popcorn
- Biscuits, cakes, muffins (except on Friday Treat Day)
- Cereal Bars (except on Friday Treat Day)

Lurga National School is currently a nut-free zone. Any products containing nuts or anything which "may contain nut traces" are not permitted. This is because there are currently children in the school who suffer from anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a life threatening allergy, in this case to nuts.

10. Friday Treat Day

Friday is Treat Day in Lurga NS. The pupils are encouraged to eat the treat after they have eaten their lunch.

On this day, pupils can bring one of the following:

Popcorn

Small biscuit

Small cereal bar (preferably homemade)

Small home bakes

Other treat days may include:

End of term parties

Halloween

School trips and events

Class rewards

On these occasions, teachers may provide treats for the class or pupils may be invited to bring in items to share. Teachers will be aware of pupils with allergies and will ensure safety and inclusivity.

11. Implementation

If a pupil brings prohibited food or drink to school, they will be asked by the teacher to bring it home at the end of the school day, as such foods are not allowed. If the pupil does not have anything else to eat, the teacher will deal with the matter at his/her discretion. If a pupil persists in bringing unhealthy food to school, the teacher will organise a meeting with the child's parent/guardian to remind them of Lurga NS's Healthy Eating Policy. School staff will consistently implement the Healthy Eating Policy to ensure that it is adhered to.

12. Allergies

If a child has a serious food allergy, the parents/guardians must notify the school and provide a doctor's report stating the implications of the allergy and listing the foods to be avoided. Parents/guardians will be asked to participate with staff in formulating an individual Allergy Management Plan. This plan will identify how best to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction for the child and it will outline the protocol to be implemented if an allergic reaction occurs. Further details can be found Lurga National School's Administration of Medication Policy.

13. Ratification & Communication

This Healthy Eating Policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on _____, following consultation with staff, pupils and parents/guardians. The policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association.

14. Monitoring & Evaluation

The implementation of this Healthy Eating Policy will be monitored by the Principal, staff and Board of Management. It will be reviewed and evaluated at regular intervals, including through formal and informal feedback from parents/guardians, pupils, staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation.

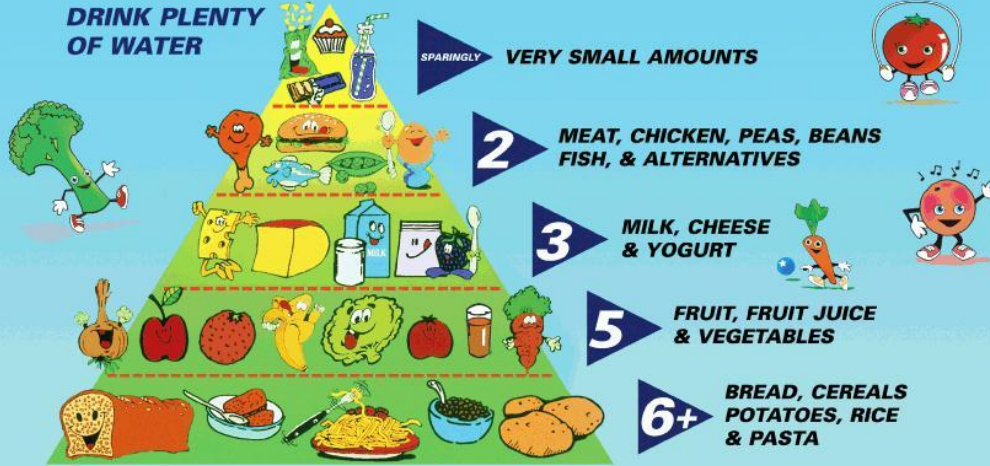
Ratified by the Board of Management on

Signed: _____

Date: _____

THE FOOD PYRAMID

**DRINK PLENTY
OF WATER**



Food Pyramid servings above are suitable for children from 5 years of age.

Children should do at least 1 hour of moderate intensity activity, most days of the week

For younger children, start with smaller and fewer servings and increase up to the guidelines recommended, according to the child's own growth and appetite.