

# Healthy Eating Policy

*for our*

## Children



*Community Dietitian Team, Health Promotion Department, Health Service Executive Dublin North East*



## Introduction

### *Health Service Executive Dublin North East (HSE DNE) School's 'Healthy Eating Policy'.*

We establish our eating habits at a young age. What we eat affects our own immediate health, and for those who are still young enough it will make a significant difference to how healthy they are in later life.

We know from recent Irish and European studies that our young people eat too much sugar, salt and fats. On the other hand they don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. There is a clear link between what we eat and our risk of becoming over weight/obese and of getting heart disease or diabetes. What we eat when we are young has an impact on how well we are when we are older.

If we encourage young people to choose and enjoy different foods, we have given them a good start to life, and hopefully started some good habits, which will be with them into adulthood. Maybe as part of this project they can also influence *our* eating habits - it's never too late to start healthy eating.

One believes that the success of such a policy depends on the level of co-operation between parents, schools, health professionals and the wider community.

For these reasons the Health Service Executive Dublin North East is delighted to support this healthy eating project with **St Paul's National School**. The project adopts a whole school approach that involves the teachers, pupils, parents and the community, in line with the World Health Organisation's 'Health Promoting School'.

Thanks to the school principal, teachers, staff, parents and students for the time and expertise that they put into the development and implementation of this '*Healthy Eating Policy*'.

Hearty gratitude to the staff involved in producing this very important document.

**Emer Smyth**  
**A/Head of Health Promotion and Improvement**  
**Health Service Executive – DNE**  
**Date: June 2018**

## **Principal's Acknowledgement**

As Principal of **St. Paul's National School**, I am very excited by our school's involvement in this HSE initiative 'Health Promoting School' and our revised Healthy Eating Policy. The whole school has always had a huge interest in the health and activity levels of our children. Having been an 'Active School' and a 'Healthy Eating School' for years we are eager to renew our commitment to the implementation of this policy in our school. I look forward to the continued participation and co-operation of all staff members, pupils and parents and I have no doubt it will greatly benefit the entire school community.

Habits of a lifetime are established from a young age and, in so far as health in later life is concerned, children are the ideal group to work with in developing a better outlook to health through diet and lifestyle. Accordingly, in **St. Paul's National School** through our implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme, we assist our pupils in the formation of positive and responsible attitudes to eating and we help them to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

I wish to thank most sincerely all those who have participated and contributed enthusiastically and positively to the development of this Healthy Eating Policy:

Morag McGowan	<b>Principal, St. Paul's National School</b>
Siobhán Kennedy	<b>HPS Co-ordinator, St. Paul's National School</b>
Áine O'Toole	<b>HPS Co-ordinator, St. Paul's National School</b>
Susanne Shevlin	<b>Senior Community Dietitian – HSE DNE</b>
Mary Carr	<b>Health Education Officer (Oral Health) HSE DNE</b>
Carmel Halpin	<b>Locality Health Promotion Officer – HSE DNE</b>

## Letter of Commitment

### The Role of the Principal is to:

1. Sign 'Letter of Commitment' to initiate the process.
2. Set up a Healthy Eating Policy Committee to oversee the development and implementation of the policy. This committee will comprise of teachers, parents, students, school health promotion officer and other stakeholders e.g. caterers, special needs assistant representative etc. In consultation with the community dietitian, the Healthy Eating Policy will be drawn up within an agreed timeframe.
3. Initiate and lead implementation, continuation and sustainability of the policy.
4. Take responsibility for keeping the operational points of the policy on file for future reference and every 2 years review, along with the community dietitian and the school's health promotion officer.
5. Ensure that the draft or final policy is not circulated to other schools as it is based on a school's own individual needs.

### The Remit of the Committee is to:

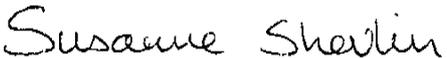
1. Oversee the completion of healthy eating survey and study the findings.
2. Draft Healthy Eating guidelines appropriate to the individual school setting which will form the basis of the Healthy Eating Policy.
3. Forward the draft Healthy Eating guidelines to the School's Health Promotion Officer for comment and approval in conjunction with the Community Dietitian and Oral Health Education Officer.
4. Circulate the draft Healthy Eating guidelines to staff, parents, board of management, parents' association and students for appraisal.
5. Amend the final draft, based on comments received from above stakeholders.
6. Ratify final draft and disseminate to the wider school community.
7. Implement the agreed Healthy Eating Policy.
8. Organise launch of the Healthy Eating Policy.
9. Nominate two members to monitor and evaluate the Healthy Eating Policy on a regular basis.

### The role of the Community Dietitian is to:

1. Consult and advise committee on policy content where required.

Signed:  Date: June 2018  
**Principal**

Signed:  Date: June 2018  
**Senior Health Promotion Officer-Schools HSE Dublin North East**

Signed:  Date: June 2018  
**Senior Community Dietitian HSE Dublin North East**

Signed:  Date: June 2018  
**Health Education Officer-Oral Health HSE Dublin North East**



## **St. Paul's N.S. Healthy Eating Policy**

As part of the subject Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the school's involvement in the Health Promoting School programme (HPS), St. Paul's encourages the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

A good diet, **plenty of sleep**, fresh air and exercise are essential to a growing child. It is recommended that children are physically active for at least 60 minutes a day and should have less than 2 hours screen time per day. 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 leading to a better quality of work in school, it lessens hyperactivity and protects teeth). Allow plenty of time in the morning for your child to eat a healthy breakfast. Eating habits started in childhood will influence your child's chances of a healthy life. A good variety of nourishing foods is important from the start to ensure a healthy growing child.

### **Aims:**

- 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.

### **Objectives:**

- 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 (roughage).

We ask you to ensure a healthy lunch right from the start. When making your child's lunch please think 'whole healthy nutritious food'.

The below table is a guide designed to help you provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children.

<p><b>Bread &amp; Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread or rolls (preferably wholemeal)</li> <li>• Rice salad (preferably wholegrain)</li> <li>• Pasta salad (preferably wholegrain)</li> <li>• Tortilla wrap (preferably wholemeal)</li> <li>• Wholemeal scones</li> <li>• Pitta bread (preferably wholemeal)</li> <li>• Porridge Bread</li> </ul>	<p><b>Savouries</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean meat</li> <li>• Chicken / Turkey</li> <li>• Tinned fish e.g. tuna, sardines, salmon</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Quiche</li> <li>• Healthy pitta pizzas</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruit &amp; Vegetables</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apples</li> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Peaches</li> <li>• Mandarins</li> <li>• Orange segments</li> <li>• Fresh Fruit salad</li> <li>• Carrot sticks</li> <li>• Plums</li> <li>• Stewed fruit</li> <li>• Pineapple cubes</li> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Sweetcorn</li> <li>• Sugar snap peas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Drinks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Low sugar content Yoghurts or yoghurt drinks (<b>except in Junior Infants</b>) may be eaten but please ensure that your child is able to store, open and eat yoghurts carefully and properly.</li> <li>• Soup – stored in a flask for children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Class only.</li> </ul>

## **The following foods are NOT permitted:**

Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives including the following:

- Sweets, bars, chocolate, biscuits etc.
- Chewing gum
- Breakfast or cereal bars
- Fruit winders
- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks) or popcorn
- Birthday treats for themselves and fellow classmates
- Chocolate Spread
- **Nuts or nut products due to food allergies:** We have a number of children in the school who have heightened sensitivities or allergies to certain foods, especially nuts in any form. For these children, eating the wrong food or, for some children having such food in their immediate vicinity could cause anaphylactic shock, cause serious illness or prove fatal. In an effort to prevent any of these ever happening, all parents are asked to be extremely careful in preparing their child's lunch. Please ensure that nuts or any nut derivatives in any form are **never** included. Also, please remind your child not to share or swap lunches.

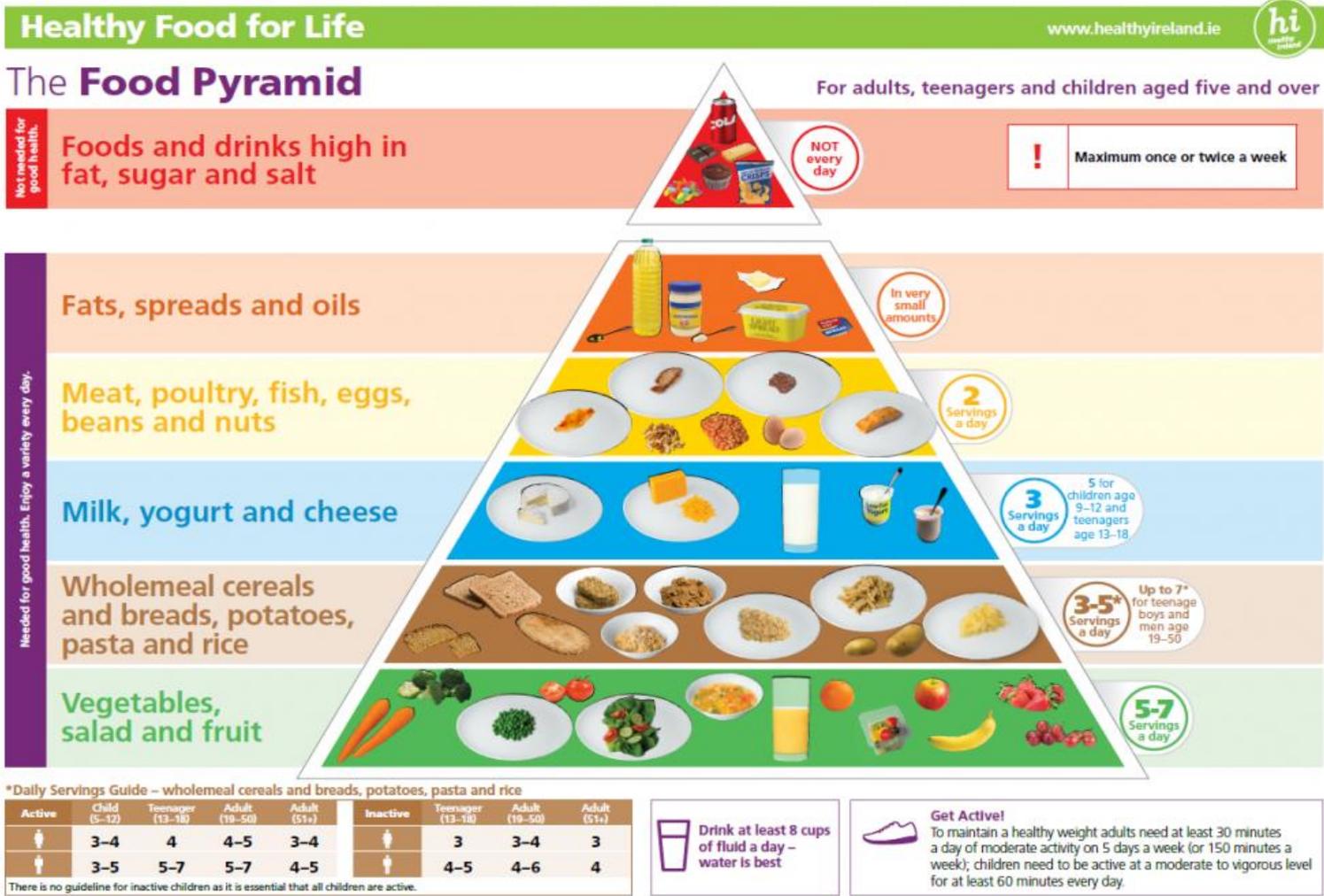
## **The following drinks are NOT permitted:**

- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water, juices etc)
- Drinks in glass bottles
- Hot drinks, e.g. tea, coffee and hot chocolate.
- Diluted cordial drinks and juices

\*\* On special occasions the school will decide when a treat is allowed. \*\*

## Food Pyramid:

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the guidelines in the new Food Pyramid.



## Funky Fruit Friday:

We have Funky Fruit Friday every Friday, where the children bring in a funky fresh fruit for their lunch. By “funky” we mean a fruit that they wouldn’t normally bring in, or choosing a more exotic fruit or even making their normal fruit “funky”. On Fridays we see a great variety of exotic, colourful and unusual fresh fruit like water melon, kiwi, berries, mango, coconut and many more.

## Green Flag School:

St. Paul's is part of the Green Schools' Programme and with this in mind we are asking children and families to work with us to ensure we keep our Green flags.

- As part of the Green Schools' Programme it is important that packaging of school lunches is kept to a minimum. Children can cut down on the amount of packaging they use by refilling plastic bottles and reducing use of tin foil and cling film. Lunch boxes and reusable sandwich bags are good alternatives to foil and cling film.
- All waste and uneaten food should be returned home in children's lunch boxes.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2018.

Date: June 2018

These 'Healthy Eating' Guidelines reflect the needs of the **St. Paul's National School** *whole* School Community - staff, parents and children.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

*Produced by*  
**The Community Dietitian Team  
Health Promotion Department  
Health Service Executive DNE  
St. Paul's HPS Committee**

