

Scoil Náisiúnta an Chroí Ró-Naofa

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An Ráth
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Healthy Eating Policy

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, we at Rath National School encourage our children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance. For example; 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.

We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we will:

- Inform parents about the school's healthy eating policy and practice
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it

This Healthy Eating Policy was reviewed in spring 2023. All stakeholders in the process i.e. parents, pupils, staff, were consulted and the revised policy was ratified by the board of management on March 6th 2023.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Rath N.S. seeks to help the children to grow and develop into healthy, confident, mature young adults, capable of realising their full potential as human beings. Developing a healthy attitude to food and helping children to develop good habits is seen as an important part of school life.

Aims

- To encourage a positive attitude to food
- To promote a healthy diet
- To educate about different foods
- To promote good eating habits
- To encourage children to have a healthy diet
- To inform the adults of the school community about healthy eating in school
- To have a healthy school community

Objectives

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

Curriculum

- 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 and Physical Education.
- A copy of the healthy food pyramid is on display in every classroom.

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

<p><u>Bread & Alternatives</u> Bread or rolls (preferably whole- meal, whole-grain or whole- wheat varieties) Wraps Pitta bread Bread sticks Rice Wholegrain Pasta Wholemeal Scones Crackers</p> <p><u>Fruit & Vegetables</u> Apples, Banana, Peach Mandarins, Plums Orange segments Fruit Salad, dried fruit Pineapple cubes, Grapes Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Tomato Pepper slices Carrot batons</p>	<p><u>Savouries</u> Lean Meat (e.g. chicken/turkey, ham) Eggs Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines/salmon Potato Salad Hummus</p> <p><u>Drinks</u> Water or Milk are the ideal choice Yoghurt</p> <p><u>Dairy</u> Milk Natural Yoghurt Cheese (triangles/slices/ small blocks of cheddar/gouda/edam etc)</p>
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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. Almost 30% of pupils currently say they make their own lunch.

We encourage children to bring in a **water bottle** (that can be recycled) so they can have access to water throughout the day. Hydration is important for concentration.

We ask that children do not bring the following to school:

- Snacks known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives
- Fizzy drinks, sports drinks and drinks/juices with high sugar content
- Chewing gum
- Any product containing **chocolate**, including chocolate spread and chocolate yogurts
- Sweets & winders
- Crisps & flavoured popcorn
- Biscuits/cakes/muffins/traybakes (including homemade)
- Cereal Bars
- Nuts (including peanut butter) due to the presence of severe allergies in the school

Special Days and Celebrations

On special occasions and celebrations, with the permission of the class teacher, pupils are allowed a small portion from the top shelf of the food pyramid. This will be supplied by the school and/or our Parents' Association. ***Friday is not a treat day in Rath N.S.***

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 nuts and 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 encourage the school's healthy eating policy
- Encourage children to make & pack their own lunches

Role of Children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Eating Policy
- To abide by our Healthy Eating Policy

Role of School Staff:

- To promote and encourage healthy eating
- Fair & consistent enforcement of rules
- Display posters around the school
- Praise / highlight healthy lunches occasionally
- Model healthy eating
- Limit the treats in the staffroom
- Classes encouraged to 'grow your own' food in the polytunnel

- Ensure there's enough time given for lunches to be eaten
- To educate children by teaching the appropriate content from the curriculum.

Responsibility for Review

A policy review will take place within three school years and will be co-ordinated by the school principal.

Communication and Ratification

The Healthy Eating Policy was ratified by the board of management on March 6th 2023. A copy of the new policy will be sent to all parents and it will be published on the school website (www.rathns.ie)

Signed: Tom Blanche (Chairperson)

Date: 6/03/23

Signed: Tommy Fitzgerald (Principal)

Date: 6/03/23