

POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE CBS MARINO

Document Title:

Healthy Eating Guidelines

Effective Date:

September 2023

Document No:13

Revision No:2

No. of pages:8

1. Purpose

In our implementation of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999) – particularly in the subject areas of SPHE, Science, and PE – we in Scoil Mhuire CBS, Marino encourage pupils to become increasingly aware of the importance of food for energy and growth.

This policy, developed by school staff in consultation with the Parents' Association and Student Council, provides a framework for the promotion of healthy eating habits in our school.

As well as consulting all relevant stakeholders, this policy was written with cognisance of and reference to the following Government publications: *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* (2018); *Healthy Eating Policy Toolkit for Primary Schools* (2019); *HSE Tips for Healthy Eating*; and the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999).

2. Scope

This policy, an element of our efforts to promote the wellbeing of the school community, should be considered in the wider context of our work in Scoil Mhuire CBS; namely the promotion of physical and mental health as an integral aspect of the holistic development of our pupils. In Scoil Mhuire CBS we aim to:

- promote the personal development and wellbeing of all our pupils
- promote the health of each pupil and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects

While curricular policies will address the health promotion content embedded in the SPHE, PE, and Science programmes implemented in the school, this policy seeks:

- to facilitate and enable pupils to make healthy eating choices
- to facilitate families in exposing their children to a wide variety of fruit and vegetables

3. Principles

The principal goal underpinning the development of this policy is the desire to **create a school environment conducive to promoting healthy eating choices.**

As such, in line with HSE advice to families, **with the exception of nuts we will not impose an outright ban any foods**, nor will we ever stop a pupil from eating the lunch they have brought to school. Rather, these guidelines seek to support families in providing their children with the opportunity to eat a healthy, balanced diet.

POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE CBS MARINO

Document Title: Healthy Eating Guidelines
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Document No:13

Revision No:2

No. of pages:8

4. Policy

LUNCHBOXES

In Scoil Mhuire CBS pupils have **two designated eating breaks**. These breaks take place in the classroom under the supervision of the teacher. Pupils are encouraged to clear away their books and copies before eating, and sanitising materials are made available should desks need to be cleaned.

In line with recommendations of the HSE, we advise that:

- The lunchbox is filled with a variety of foods including: fruit and vegetables; protein; dairy; and starchy foods.
- Pupils are – in line with their developing capacity – involved in packing their lunch. This may begin with younger pupils being allowed to choose a colourful or themed lunchbox, or being allowed to decorate a lunchbox according to their interests. Later, families might help pupils to choose an element of their lunch. Finally, families might be in a position to supervise pupils making a simple salad, sandwich, or wrap.
- Where pupils need to see and taste new foods several times before accepting them, we suggest that families try new foods at home before including them in the lunchbox.

For further information about the types of food that should be included in the lunchbox, and for ideas on planning for a varied lunchbox, please refer to Appendices A & B.

While there is no outright ban on any foods, we suggest that the following foods should be avoided when packing lunchboxes:

- Crisps
- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Fizzy drinks

It is the advice of the HSE that those foods listed above should be perceived as “occasional treats” rather than “regular snacks”. As such, these items should only sparingly be included in lunchboxes, potentially to coincide with special school events.

EAT A RAINBOW!

During each school year there will be **three** designated *Eat a Rainbow* weeks. These weeks will be timetabled to coincide with our return to school after an extended break in order to promote healthy eating choices and provide families with the opportunity to expose their children to a wide variety of fruit and vegetables.

During *Eat a Rainbow Week* pupils in each classroom will have an **additional Rainbow Break**, and will be encouraged to discuss their snack(s) in the whole-class setting.

Each year the first *Eat a Rainbow Week* will take place on our return to school after the Summer break, the second will take place on our return to school after the Christmas break, and the third will take place on our return to school after the Easter break. The format for each *Eat a Rainbow* week will follow the schedule outlined below:

POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE CBS MARINO

Document Title: Healthy Eating Guidelines
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Revision No:2

No. of pages:8

Monday	Red fruit and vegetables
Tuesday	Orange fruit and vegetables
Wednesday	Yellow fruit and vegetables
Thursday	Green fruit and vegetables
Friday	Blue or Purple fruit and vegetables

WELLBEING PROMOTION

The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the ethos of Scoil Mhuire CBS. These Healthy Eating Guidelines should be viewed as an element of our overall aim to promote the physical and mental health of our pupils.

Wellbeing Wednesday

A Wellbeing Committee was established in September 2022 with the express intention of promoting the wellbeing of pupils and staff alike.

The Wellbeing Committee, in association with the Student Council, organise monthly events and activities for the entire school community. Each Wellbeing Wednesday (the last Wednesday of the month) sees the school community engage in an activity designed to lift the mood, enjoy the present, and take a break from our regular classroom routines.

Wellbeing through Physical Activity

We seek to promote the physical and mental health of our pupils through physical activity. In addition to the hour of PE allocated to pupils each week, here in Scoil Mhuire we encourage:

- **active lunch breaks:** whereby pupils can engage in imaginative games, chasing games, or football
- **the Tuesday Trek:** whereby pupils participate in a timed (four-minute) run on the school yard after their break. Pupils keep track of how many laps they can complete, and monitor their own progress throughout the year
- **active homework:** to coincide with each *Eat a Rainbow* week, active homework is assigned to all pupils in order to encourage healthy lifestyle choices
- **participation in team sports:** namely Gaelic Football and Hurling which are generously facilitated by staff after school
- **movement in the classroom:** teachers try to incorporate some fundamental movement skills, for example throwing and catching, into their lessons

Wellbeing through Healthy Eating

As well as encouraging pupils to make healthy eating choices through the implementation of these Healthy Eating Guidelines, pupils will learn about the importance of food for energy and growth through formal instruction in both SPHE (Strand: *Myself*, Strand Unit: *Taking Care of my Body*) and Science (Strand: *Living Things*, Strand Unit: *Human Life*).

5. Appendices

APPENDIX A: HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES (HSE, 2018)

Here's what should go in a healthy lunchbox

Vegetables, salad and fruit

At least one portion from the fruit and vegetables food group...

- 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar size fruit
- 2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or similar size fruit
- A small glass (150ml) of unsweetened fruit juice
- Half a tin (3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons) of fruit in its own juice
- 1 heaped dessertspoon of dried fruit (for example, raisins or sultanas)
- 1 small bunch of grapes (10 grapes)
- 1 small salad (for example, dessert bowl sized salad of lettuce, tomato, cucumber and celery sticks)
- 3 tablespoons or 4 dessertspoons of vegetables (for example, chopped or grated carrots)
- A bowl of homemade vegetable soup in a thermos flask for older children

Did you know?

To avoid soggy sandwiches put juicy vegetables between some lettuce and other sandwich fillings for example, cheese. For younger children cutting fruit into manageable size chunks will encourage them to eat more fruit.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

One portion from the meat and meat alternatives food group...

- 2 slices (50–75g) of cooked meat
- 1–2 eggs (hard-boiled, sliced or mashed)
- A small can (100g) of tuna, salmon, mackerel or sardines
- 4 tablespoons of hummus - try out as a dip with carrots or celery

Note: Fish such as tinned tuna or salmon should be included in the lunchbox at least once a week – remove any bones

Did you know?

Lean cuts of meat such as chicken breast are lower in salt than processed meats such as ham and bacon. Choose lean meat more often than processed meat.



POLICY OF SCOIL MHUIRE CBS MARINO

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Healthy Eating Guidelines
September 2023

Document No:13

Revision No:2

No. of pages:8



Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

One portion from the bread and cereals group which would be...

- 2 thin slices of wholemeal bread
- 1 small bread roll
- 1 tortilla wrap
- 1 pitta bread
- 4–6 crackers or breadsticks
- 1 cup of cooked rice, pasta or couscous
- 1 small bagel

Did you know?

Including wholegrain varieties of breads and cereals in our diet can help us feel fuller for longer and prevent constipation.

Milk, yoghurt and cheese

One portion from the dairy products food group...

- 1 glass or mini-carton of milk (200ml)
- A pot of natural or low-fat yoghurt (125ml) or custard
- 2 cheese triangles
- 2 thumbs (25g) of cheese such as cheddar, edam or gouda varieties

Note: Low-fat dairy products are suitable for children over two years of age. Flavoured milks are also a good source of calcium but have a higher energy and sugar content than plain milk – check labels and compare brands.

Did you know?

Dairy products are especially important in the diets of children and teenagers as they provide calcium to support growing bones and teeth. Low-fat natural yoghurt with fruit is the best option.

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Healthy Eating Guidelines
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Document No:13

Revision No:2

No. of pages:8

5-day lunchbox planner

We often end up putting the same things in the lunchbox everyday. Keeping lunchbox contents varied makes lunch more enjoyable. The following planner shows you some examples of snacks and lunch items.

Monday

1 medium wholemeal bread roll with tomato and cheese

+



+

Handful of carrot sticks

+

Pot of low-fat yoghurt

+



Tuesday

Small pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn

+



+

½ wholemeal scone

+



+



Wednesday

2 tablespoons of pasta with 1 tablespoon of tomatoes and vegetables

+



+

2 crackers with low-fat cheddar cheese

+



+



Thursday

2 slices of wholemeal bread with cooked ham and lettuce

+

Slices of pepper, cucumber, sugar snap peas or mangetout

+



+

Yoghurt

+



Friday

Tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce

+



+

Small tub of stewed fruit

+

6 cherry tomatoes

+



POLICY OF SCOIL MUIRE CBS MARINO

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Healthy Eating Guidelines
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Document No:13

Revision No:2

No. of pages:8

APPENDIX B: HEALTHY LUNCHBOX TO GROW, LEARN AND PLAY (HSE, 2006)

FILLINGS FOR SANDWICHES

MONDAY		Lean ham, beef, pork lamb		Try to include some salad every day
TUESDAY		Cooked chicken or turkey		Carrot could be grated in a sandwich or chopped in sticks to eat on its own
WEDNESDAY		Tinned tuna or salmon		Sweetcorn goes great with tuna. Try it!
THURSDAY		Egg - hard boiled, sliced or mashed		Use spring onion, light mayonnaise or relish to add flavour
FRIDAY		Cheese - slices, cubes or cheese spreads		Cucumber can be added to the sandwich or eaten on its own

Baps and Breads

Wholemeal and wholegrain bread is best as it is higher in fibre than white.
Try rolls, baps, wraps, crispbreads, burger buns, crackers, scones.
Tip! Cut sandwiches in fingers, triangles or squares for a change.

Feeling Fruity?

Include fruit every day for lunch and break time.
Try banana, grapes, orange segments, plum, pear, apple slices, kiwi (cut in half and eaten with a spoon).
Tip: Squeeze lemon juice over sliced apple, pear or banana to prevent from going brown.

Dairy Delights

Include something from the milk group at every lunch.
Milk to drink, yogurt as a snack, cheese in a sandwich.
Tip! For variety try cheese slices, cubes, triangles or grated cheese.



Add any of these - cold rice, cold pasta, grated or sliced raw carrot, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, celery, peppers, cheese, egg, tuna, slice of ham, chicken pieces.

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6. Approval & Review

Initial Approval

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

9th May, 2023

Date

1st September, 2023

Effective Date

June 2025

Review Date

