



## **Healthy Eating Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

Our Healthy Eating policy was coordinated by the Principal, learning support team and teaching staff during the academic year 2018/2019. The development of our Healthy Eating Policy was identified as one of our priorities during a Staff meeting in September 2018. This policy was drafted using guidelines provided in circular 0003/2016 "Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Primary Schools" with reference to the food pyramid provided by the Department of Health in 2016.

*"It is important for the present and future health of our population that pupils are equipped with the key skills and knowledge which will enable them more confidently to make healthier life choices" - (Circular 03/2016 Promotion of healthy lifestyles in Primary Schools)*

### **Rationale**

*Schools and the wider education sector have a vital role to play in contributing to the 'Healthy Ireland' agenda that is being led by the Department of Health and is supported by the Department of Education and Skills and other Government Departments. Schools are contributing to the overall physical, mental health and well-being of our young people. But there are many challenges for our young people if they are to adopt a healthy lifestyle and enjoy positive health and wellbeing to their full potential. We can, in collaboration with parents and families, all do more to address these challenges." - (Circular 03/2016 Promotion of healthy lifestyles in Primary Schools)*

Convent Primary School Killaloe, through this policy, aims to help all those involved in our school community in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating, and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health. 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 life).

### **Aims of the Policy**

- Encourage the belief and attitude that having a balanced and healthy diet is important to your well being.
- Ensure that all reference to food and nutrition at a school level promotes healthy habits in our pupils.

- Foster positive eating habits going forward into the future.
- Assist parents where required in ensuring their child has a healthy and balanced diet.
- Adhere to all nutrition guidelines and recommendations issued by the department.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***Board of Management:***

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on Healthy Eating.

### ***Principal:***

The school principal should

- Implement and monitor the school's Healthy Eating policy on an on-going basis.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to Healthy Eating, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of Healthy Eating.

### ***Class Teacher:***

- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils regarding nutrition.

### ***Parents/Guardians:***

- It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that their child/children's lunches adhere to the healthy eating policy in place in the school.

### ***Pupils:***

- Pupils should strive at all times to adhere to the healthy eating policy in place in the school.

## **Healthy Eating Guidelines**

These guidelines are designed to help parents adhere to the Healthy Eating Policy in a quick, nutritious, and tasty manner.

- 1) Encourage wholemeal or wholegrain varieties of bread, etc.

- 2) Use butter or spreads sparingly.
- 3) Include a drink (preferably water or milk) at lunch.
- 4) Include salad vegetables in sandwiches and salad boxes.
- 5) Include at least one piece of fruit at lunch.
- 6) Encourage that milk, cheese or yogurt is included as part of lunch.
- 7) Encourage that meat, chicken, fish, egg or cheese is included as part of the lunchbox.

**It is vital for each pupil's well-being and learning that she has a breakfast before coming to school.**

### **Foods which are recommended:**

- Brown, wholemeal or whole wheat Bread/Rolls Pita Breads, Wraps, Crackers, Pasta, Rice
- Ham, Chicken, Turkey, Hardboiled Eggs, Fish (Tuna/Sardines)
- Vegetable Salad (lettuce, cucumber, sweet-corn, tomato) Vegetable Sticks (carrot, celery, peppers)
  - Fresh Fruit (apples, mandarins, peaches, pears, plums, bananas, kiwis, oranges)
  - Dried Fruit (raisins, sultanas, apricots, figs)
- Quiche, Omelette
- Cheese, Yogurt, Fromage Frais
- Water, Milk

### **Foods which are not recommended:**

- Any snack known to be high in sugar, saturated fat, salt, additives and preservatives

"Dietary factors are the most important risk factors undermining health and wellbeing in every single country in the World Health Organisation European Region. Research shows that excess consumption of foods high in fats, salt and sugar, as well as low levels of vegetables and fruit intake, play a significant role in increasing our risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer " (*HSE, 2019*)

### **Foods that are Not Permitted**

- ***Nuts or nut based products (due to risk of allergic reactions)***
  - Chewing Gum
  - Sweets
  - Crisps
  - Lollipops
  - Fizzy drinks (carbonated drinks)
  - Sports or energy drinks of any kind.
  - Chocolate in any form
  - Popcorn
  - Cereal bars
  - Frubes

## Healthy Eating Initiatives

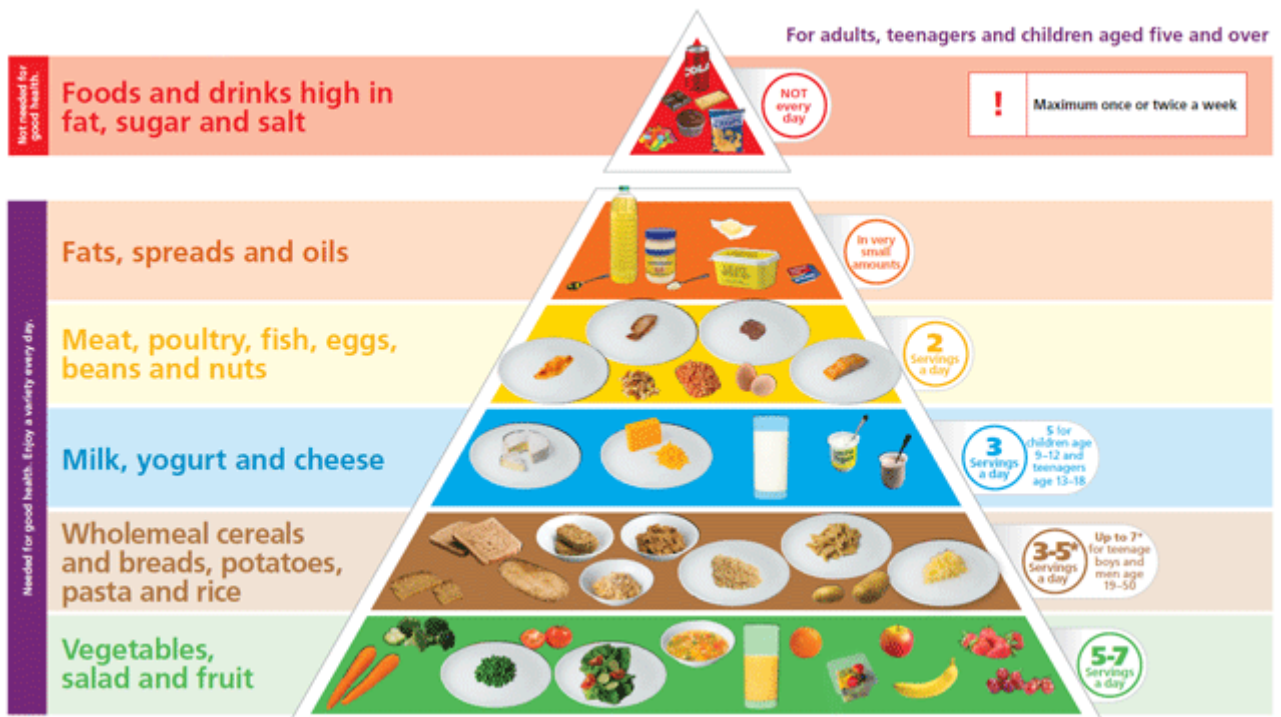
The curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles through the science, P.E and SPHE curricula. Our school endeavours to provide a positive modelling and supportive attitude to encourage healthy eating with initiatives such as Food Dudes and the School Garden. CPS is a Green Flag School and works to reduce litter and protect our school environment. Therefore all uneaten food, and all waste from lunch (wrappers, containers etc) must be taken home in lunchboxes. For safety reasons cans and glass are not permitted

## The Food Pyramid

The food pyramid is designed in a very simple way to show us the foods that we should eat lots of, and the food which should be eaten sparingly. Using the food pyramid and promoting the food pyramid will lead to children having a more healthy and balanced diets ensuring all nutrition requirements are met.

- The bottom of the pyramid contains the foods you should eat lots of.
- The middle of the pyramid contains foods you should eat some, but not too much of.
- The top of the pyramid is the smallest part of the pyramid. It contains foods you can eat once in a while. When consuming, should be done sparingly.

A child's Lunch should provide one third of that child's food requirements for the day. The most effective way to plan a healthy lunch is to include one food from each of the 4 lowest food groups - one piece of fruit, milk/yoghurt, two slices of bread and meat/poultry/cheese.



**Note: Each child must be capable of managing all of her lunch by herself e.g. opening of cartons, flasks, etc. For health & safety reasons hot water for soup, etc. cannot be supplied. Lunches cannot be heated up in school due to Health and Safety.**

## **Children with Special Dietary Requirements**

Parents must inform the school if their child has special dietary requirements due to health reasons - as determined by medical professionals. Every effort will be made to accommodate these requirements, where absolutely necessary.

## **Monitoring and Promotion**

All members of staff who are supervising break times will monitor adherence to the healthy eating policy. Where necessary teachers will reinforce the schools policy verbally to the children. Children at all times will be encouraged to eat healthy food. Regular verbal reminders throughout the week will also serve to reinforce the policy with students. A copy of the food pyramid will be displayed in each classroom and healthy eating will be introduced through the SPHE curriculum for each class. If it is found that pupils are not adhering to the healthy eating policy, the child will get a gentle verbal reminder and a copy of the healthy eating policy will be emailed home as a follow up reminder for parents. Schools are an integral component of our society and play a considerable transformational role in the lives of our young people. Habits created at a young age continue to inform us throughout life. But such habits must be reinforced by families and their community. Your continued cooperation, and leadership, in contributing to the 'Healthy Ireland' agenda is acknowledged.

*"Schools are well placed to support pupils to develop an understanding of the nourishment of common and easily accessible food products, and facilitate the development of the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their food intake." - (Circular 03/2016 Promotion of healthy lifestyles in Primary Schools)*

**Every parent/guardian in the school is expected to support the schools healthy eating policy given it is in the best interests of the child.**

## **Exemptions**

As a general rule, children will not be given sweets or chocolate from staff. However, on a special occasion (such as end of term party or other rare occurrences such as this) an exception may be made to the policy as these are special circumstances.

## **Success criteria**

Effectiveness of the policy will be recorded through observation.

### **Ratification and Communication**

This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019.

### **Implementation and Review**

This policy will be implemented from April 2019. It will be reviewed in four years.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_