

Rathlee National School

Healthy Eating Policy

As a result of our participation in the Food Dude Healthy Eating Programme in October 2021 we set about reviewing the school's Healthy Eating Policy as part of Social, Personal and Health Education and Physical Education. The Food Dudes programme is a programme designed to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables both in school and at home. The Programme in Ireland received a "counteracting obesity" award from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2006.

As we now have DEIS Rural status, on September 4th 2023 we commenced providing hot school lunches provided by Martina's Homemade Food as part of the Department of Social Protection 'School Meals Programme'.

Martina's Homemade Food are compliant with:

HSE Standards;
Food traceability;
Food safety plan;
Ongoing staff training;
Allergy management system;
and are Environmentally aware.

Rathlee N.S. Healthy Eating Policy outlines how the school supports healthy eating practices through the promotion of healthy lunches and healthy snacks and by other means. The SPHE Guidelines aim to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

Rathlee N.S. is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake. There will be a whole school approach, involving teachers, parents and children to ensure that healthy eating messages are a part of every aspect of school life. The children will continue to receive consistent messages regarding healthy eating both at home and at school.

Aims of our Healthy Eating Policy

- 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 develop awareness of the importance of food for growth and development
- To explore food preferences in a balanced diet

Benefits of a good diet

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

Breakfast

A nourishing breakfast is the best start to your 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.

Small Break

The children have an exercise break each morning. Food at this break should be easy to eat. Ideally a small sandwich or piece of fruit. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

Lunch Break

Hot lunches are provided by *Martina's Homemade Foods*. Each family signs in and orders hot lunch for their child before 5.00 p.m. every Wednesday for the following week. The website address is: <https://www.martinashomemadefoods.ie/>

Special Treats

On specific days during the school year the children will be permitted special treats:

- End of term parties
- School Tours

Food items not permitted in school:

- Fizzy drinks, sports drinks and drinks/juices with high sugar content
- Chewing gum
- Chocolate (including chocolate spread)
- Sweets & winders
- Crisps & popcorn
- Biscuits/cakes/muffins/traybakes (including homemade)
- Cereal Bars

Best Practice

- Ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast
- Eat small regular meals, not one big meal each day
- Children who take physical exercise each day will have a better appetite for healthy food

- Serve brown bread instead of white
- Cut large rolls/wraps/sandwiches into more manageable sizes.

Roles and Responsibilities in implementing our policy:

Parents are responsible for providing a healthy school lunch for their child(ren).
Children are encouraged to participate in making their own healthy school lunch.
Teachers will explicitly teach about healthy eating as part of the SPHE curriculum.
Rathlee N.S. will review our Healthy Eating Policy every two years.
Our Healthy Eating Policy is available on our website at www.rathleens.ie, as a hard copy from the office and by post if requested.

The Board of Management will review this policy every second year.

This policy was reviewed in November 2023.

Signed: _____

Date: _____