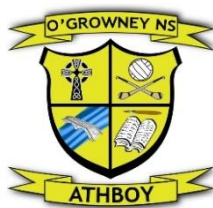


## Policy Document No. 9



# O' GROWNEY NATIONAL SCHOOL, HEALTHY EATING POLICY

## Introductory Statement

For many years O'Growney National School has been actively raising the awareness of pupils in the school on the importance of healthy eating. The writing of this policy is a natural progression from this and was drawn up by Ms. Jo-Anne Murphy and Ms. Nikki Mangan in consultation with the staff and pupils of O'Growney National School. It will continue to be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

## Rationale

This policy was formulated to increase awareness on the importance of healthy eating through education for pupils and guidance for parents. We approach this policy with the understanding that ultimately children's appetites and tastes differ and it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that his/her child eats healthily at all times. We believe that healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well-being. Our pupils spend a large part of their day in school where they eat one of their main meals.

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) and Science programmes we encourage each child to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes.<sup>1</sup>

Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of children and as such is part of the holistic education that we advocate as part of our education philosophy.

## A Healthy Lunch

A healthy lunch includes a piece of food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid. Nutrition is an incredibly important part of life for school-going children. A third of the day's energy needs should be provided at lunch (calories, vitamins and minerals) without being high in fat, sugar or salt. Parents are encouraged to provide their child with a healthy lunch from the start.

Healthy choices of drink include water, milk and fruit juices. Fizzy drinks are not allowed. Healthy choices of foods include fruit, chopped vegetables, salad, yoghurts, cheese, scones, rice cakes, crackers, small packets of raisins/dried fruit, popcorn etc.

On occasion, children may be given a treat such as a cereal bar, flapjack, muffin, rice crispie bun, fruit brack etc.

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<sup>1</sup> **S.P.H.E.** Strand: Taking Care of My Body – Food and Nutrition (Curriculum Junior Infants – 6<sup>th</sup> Class)

**Science** Strand: Living Things – Myself (Curriculum Junior Infants – 6<sup>th</sup> Class)

As per our “Golden School Rules”, the following foods are not permitted as part of a child’s lunch: fizzy drinks, crisps, sweets, bars, chewing gum and “fast food”.

Food containing nuts, though healthy, are not encouraged in classes where there are children who are allergic to nuts.

## Why?

Healthy food is important for the following reasons:

- ❖ Food is our only source of energy.
- ❖ Children are growing and developing and need a good diet.
- ❖ Food helps children to work well and improves concentration at school.
- ❖ A balanced diet is important for our children’s health.
- ❖ Children who develop good eating habits will have them for life.

## Promoting Our Healthy Lunch Policy

- ✓ Parents and Staff will promote the policy throughout the school week.
- ✓ A copy of the food pyramid will be displayed in every classroom from December 2011.
- ✓ Information on the food pyramid and healthy lunch ideas will be displayed on our school website from December 2011 and will be updated, as necessary, on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Information on healthy lunches will also be displayed on the healthy lunch notice board located in the main corridor of the school from December 2011 and will be updated, as necessary, on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Information on our Healthy Lunch Policy will also be included in Our Handbook for New Parents/Guardians from June 2012.
- ✓ We will continue to source and use means to promote this policy e.g. posters, leaflets, the food pyramid etc.
- ✓ Information will also be included in our school newsletter in an effort to communicate with parents and to encourage parents to support this policy.
- ✓ The use of sweets by teachers as treats on special occasions is permitted though, where possible, healthy alternatives are encouraged.
- ✓ Children are encouraged to bring uneaten food home.
- ✓ In an effort to reduce litter in our school children are encouraged to keep food wrappings to a minimum and to bring home their rubbish.
- ✓ Information on healthy eating will be taught in all classes as part of the S.P.H.E. programme, strand unit: *Food and Nutrition*.
- ✓ As part of O’Growney National School’s *Code of Behaviour and Excellence* the following are not permitted on the school premises: fizzy drinks, crisps, sweets, bars, chewing gum, “Fast Food” and other “junk” food.

## Exceptions

Exceptions to our Healthy Lunch Policy can be made, on occasions, based on the professional discretion of the class teacher. These exceptions may include as a reward in recognition of hard work or good behaviour, end of term parties, school trips, school events or birthdays.

## “Discouraged” Food and Drink

If a child, brings any “discouraged” food or drink, (fizzy drink, crisps, sweets, chocolate bars, chewing gum, “Fast Food” and other “junk” food), to school it will be taken away from them for the duration of the school day. The offending item will

be returned to the child at the end of the day and the child will be reminded of the “Golden Rules”. The parents/guardians of the child will also be informed through a note in the child’s diary or orally. A record will also be kept of the incident by the teacher.

If a child has no other food to eat, they may be permitted to eat the food or an alternative lunch may be provided by the class teacher. This is at each teacher’s own professional discretion.

If a child persists in bringing unhealthy food to school a letter of warning will be sent home. This will include information on what food is not permitted as part of a child’s lunch, the reasons why a healthy lunch is important and also information on healthy lunch ideas for the parent/guardian of the child.

### **Role of the Parent**

- Provide a healthy, well-balanced lunch for their child.
- Encourage healthy eating.
- Inform the school, in writing, of any child’s special dietary needs.
- To implement school policy by not allowing their child to bring fizzy drinks, crisps, sweets, chocolate bars, chewing gum, “Fast Food” or other junk food to school.
- To follow the Green-Schools guidelines and reduce packaging and re-use bottles and lunchboxes where possible.

### **Role of the Child**

- To eat their lunch.
- To bring home any uneaten lunch.
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy.
- Not to bring fizzy drinks, crisps, sweets, chocolate bars, chewing gum, “Fast Food” or other junk food to school.
- To follow the Green Schools guidelines and keep wrappings to a minimum and to bring home their rubbish and all uneaten food.

### **Role of the School**

- To promote and encourage healthy eating.
- To provide a consistent programme of cross-curricular nutrition education.
- If a child brings a “discouraged” food or drink to school, they will not be allowed to eat them while in school.
- To teach lessons advising pupils on diet, lifestyle, fitness etc.
- If a child presents at school without a lunch parents/guardians will be contacted by phone.
- If a child presents at school without lunch consistently then the class teacher should
  - ~ Keep a record of the incidents.
  - ~ Write a note in the child’s diary to inform the parents/guardians.
  - ~ Orally inform the child’s parents/guardians through a phone call or meeting.
  - ~ Inform the D.L.P. Mrs. Sinead Skelly.

### **Success Criteria**

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy will be conducted through:

- Continued observation

- Reduction in the number of incidents where children are bringing “discouraged” foods and drinks to school.
- Increased awareness among children on healthy eating.
- End of year review and recommendations.

## **Implementation**

This policy will be implemented from Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011. On this day each class teacher will display their copy of the food pyramid in the classroom. Each teacher will discuss the food pyramid with their class and brainstorm ideas for healthy lunches.

The food pyramid will be referred to regularly during the school year.

Each class will complete at least two lessons on healthy eating during the school year based on the S.P.H.E. programme.

Information for parents/guardians on healthy lunches will be displayed on the school website.

## **Responsibilities and Timeframe for Review**

This policy has been formulated in conjunction with O’Growney National Schools *Code of Behaviour and Excellence*. This policy will be referred to regularly in individual classrooms and individual teachers will monitor the progress of the policy in their own classrooms. It will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary. The success of the first year of the policy will be reviewed in June 2012 by the staff and pupils of O’Growney National School, led by Ms. Jo-Anne Murphy and Ms. Nikki Mangan.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy will be communicated to the parents/guardians of pupils in O’Growney National School through our school newsletter, information on our school website and through the Healthy Lunch board located in the front of the school. Information will also be included in the handbook for new parents/guardians.

This policy will be communicated to all pupils on the healthy lunch launch date on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011. This policy will be communicated to all pupils by each class teacher and referred to regularly during the course of the school year.

Comments and suggestions are invited from the pupils, parents/guardians, staff and Board of Management of O’Growney National School.

**Policy ratified by the Board of Management on Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**