



Rathgormack National School

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Introductory Statement

Our Healthy Eating policy was coordinated by the Principal and teaching staff towards the end of the academic year 2022/2023. The review and development of our Healthy Eating Policy as part of Social, Personal and Health Education and Physical Education was identified as one of our priorities during a Staff meeting.

Rathgormack NS set up a student council, which is made up of children from all classes from Junior infants up to 6th class. They looked at the lunches which children in all classes were bringing in to school over the previous couple of months and compiled surveys. They found that a number of unhealthy items have crept in to the lunch boxes over the last while.

Rathgormack National School'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.

Rathgormack NS is committed to facilitating the children's development of skills and attitudes to allow them to make informed decisions about their food intake.

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 concentration
- 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 a break from 10.50am to 11.00am. This is our **Fruit & Veg break** and fruit and / or vegetables should be eaten first at this break and other items from the lunchbox if desired, thereafter. Fruit should be of a manageable size, peeled/chopped if necessary.

Lunch Break

Children get time to eat in their classes before going out on the yard at 12:30 – 1:00pm. Ideally, children's lunches should be varied. The children will bring home uneaten lunch.

Our student's council compiled a list of healthy items, and some items which we are now reminding parents, that are not allowed as part of our healthy lunch policy.

Suggestions for lunch boxes include:

- Sandwiches, rolls, pasta, brown bread, crackers
- Fruit & vegetables are a must every day for our first break in school
- Yogurts, cheese, smoothies,
- Water to drink instead of juice
- Rice cakes, healthier cereal bars (No chocolate, no nuts, no rice-crispie squares)
- Popcorn-plain and not everyday
- Plain buns (no icing or chocolate)

Items which are not permitted as part of our healthy lunch policy are:

- Crisps, including popchips
- Chocolate (on anything- including in yogurts, on rice cakes, in cereal bars)
- Nutella or any nut products
- Fizzy drinks. Water is the preferred drink in school.
- Fruit winders
- Biscuits, cakes, brownies.
- Chewing gum

A reminder that Rathgormack NS is a nut-free school as we have individuals with very serious nut allergies in school.

Special Treats

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

- End of term parties
- School Trips

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.

Rathgormack NS will review our Healthy Eating Policy as required.

Rathgormack National School Healthy Eating Policy is available on our website at www.rathgormackns.com and a hard copy can be requested from the school office

Implementation

This policy has been in operation since June 2023 and has been ratified at a Board meeting in June 2023.

Signed: Maurice Power, Chairperson BoM

Date 27/6/23

Signed: Louise Walsh, Chairperson, PA

Date 14/6/23

Signed: Cathy Power, Principal

Date 27/6/23