

HEALTHY EATING POLICY TOOLKIT FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS



SUPPORTING WELLBEING IN SCHOOLS



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service

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*Available in electronic format on www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing



WHY HAVE A HEALTHY EATING POLICY?

This toolkit has been developed to guide and support schools to either develop and implement a new policy or to review and improve an existing policy.

A healthy eating policy enables schools to develop and maintain a shared philosophy on all aspects of food and drink, including:

- Developing consistent messages about healthy eating across the curriculum.
- Ensuring consistency between the messages within the curriculum and food available in the school.
- Ensuring food provision at school is in line with healthy eating guidelines e.g. breakfast club, school meals, water consumption.
- Creating a positive eating environment, both social and physical, at mealtimes.

This toolkit will help schools work on the following statements of effective practice outlined in the **Department of Education and Skills Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023**.

- The school environment is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices. Drinking water is freely available and rewards other than food are used to motivate children and young people.
- The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school's ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.
- Opportunities are provided for children, staff and parents to have an active voice in decisions relating to school improvement.
- Teachers use opportunities to promote wellbeing across the curriculum.

THE PROCESS

When developing or reviewing your healthy eating policy we suggest you work through the following process.

1. GETTING STARTED

2. GET YOUR TEAM TOGETHER

3. AUDIT OF CURRENT PRACTICE

4. DRAFT AN INITIAL HEALTHY EATING POLICY

5. CONSULT THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ON THE DRAFT POLICY

6. FINALISE THE POLICY

7. COMMUNICATE THE POLICY

8. IMPLEMENT THE POLICY

9. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

1. Getting Started

Discuss the concept of a healthy eating policy with key stakeholders in your school e.g. Board of Management, Principal, Management Team, Staff.

2. Get your team together

The team should consist of approximately six members including representation from children, staff, and parents/carers. Where appropriate, food providers may be involved.

3. Audit of current practice

Conduct an audit of current practice in relation to food and drink in your school. This will help you decide what needs attention. You can use the audit provided in this toolkit or create your own. Audits can provide a baseline against which progress, can be monitored at a later date. In addition, if you wish children and staff can complete the surveys included in this toolkit.

4. Draft an initial healthy eating policy

From the audit you will see what is working well and what requires a bit more attention. Try to word the policy in a positive and supportive way, aiming to create an environment conducive to promoting healthy eating choices rather than focusing on banning foods. Try to keep the policy realistic and achievable and decide who is responsible for implementing each aspect of the policy (see template for a healthy eating policy page 9-11).

5. Consult the whole school community on the draft policy

The draft policy should be made available to all stakeholders. They should be invited to comment and to add to the policy with all feedback being returned to a named individual, by a certain date. This toolkit includes a sample letter to parents and consultation questionnaire. Also consider discussing the policy with each class and having a comment box for children and staff.

6. Finalise the policy

The team should meet, in order to review all the feedback and modify the policy in light of appropriate suggestions and comments made. The policy should include an acknowledgement of who was consulted during its development and the date it was finalised.

7. Communicate the policy

The policy should be circulated annually, to relevant groups including:

- Parents and carers, staff and children.
- Groups that use the school including after school clubs.
- Other local schools, as families may have children attending these schools.

The communication of the policy to parents of future pupils also need to be planned at this stage.

Consider having a champion for your policy. Choose an enthusiastic member of the school community, someone who can promote and drive the policy. The school may also like to celebrate the introduction of the policy.

8. Implement the policy

A written implementation plan will help ensure the success of the policy. It lets people know what is expected from them in terms of implementing it. Ensure that the training and resources identified in the policy are available. This toolkit includes signposts to resources that can support implementation e.g.

- A guide to healthy celebrations and rewards to support your policy.
- Directory of healthy eating education resources.

9. Evaluation and review

It is good practice to evaluate your policy every 2 years. This toolkit contains a Policy Review checklist that you can use or you can repeat the audit and surveys from step 3. You can adapt the policy based on what worked well and what did not work well and add new ideas. Do not be afraid to change.



POLICY TEMPLATE

This is an outline of some possible content to consider for your healthy eating policy.

This is not a sample policy.

Title

- Give the healthy eating policy a title.

Rationale

- Include a brief (realistic) mission statement/context.
- Outline how the policy was developed and who was involved.
- Refer to key documents that were relevant to developing and guiding this policy document.

The Team

- List names of the team that developed the policy.

Aims

Outline what the school hopes to achieve by having a healthy eating policy, for example:

- To take a whole school approach to healthy eating in school, in relation to: the Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching and Learning), Policy and Planning, Relationships and Partnerships.
- To promote healthy eating across school life, consistent with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum
- To ensure that food provision in school reflects the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils, e.g. religious, ethnic, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To make the provision and consumption of food an enjoyable and safe experience.

Objectives

Outline how the aims listed above could be addressed through the following objectives, using the key areas of the Wellbeing Promotion process (Culture and Environment, Curriculum (teaching and learning), Policy & Planning and Relationships and Partnerships.) Consider the results of any surveys conducted with parents, students and staff and prioritise the main points. Once the policy is established, more points could be added when it is next reviewed.

Culture and Environment

Looks at Healthy Eating from a physical and social perspective. Some prompts to consider:

- Packed lunches, availability of drinking water, where food is eaten (for staff and students).
- Breakfast clubs/after school clubs.
- Time allowed for eating – balance of eating time and social time.
- Promotion of non-food rewards.
- Less focus on food at school events
- Consistent messages in all school celebration events.
- Culture of healthy eating encouraged and positive modelling by adults in school.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Covers what we learn about food, some prompts to consider:

- What will be covered in the curriculum e.g. SPHE, Science etc.
- What resources will be used for teaching and communicating with parents.
- How external agencies will support us, in line with the guidelines in Department of Education and Skills Circular 0042/2018.

Policy and Planning

Some prompts to consider:

- Plan SPHE on healthy eating at similar times across class groups
- Ensure external meal providers adhere to healthy eating guidelines.
- Introduction of the school milk scheme.

Relationships and Partnerships

Covers with whom schools work and communicate.

Some prompts to consider:

- Parents Association events.
- Communication with parents/staff on the healthy eating policy materials.
- External partners that support school curriculum – sporting partners, etc.
- After school activities in schools
- Local shops, etc.

Key Measures

These could include some key measures to indicate how the policy will be implemented, e.g.

- Healthy eating covered as outlined in the SPHE curriculum outcomes.
- Staff attending professional updating/training.
- Increase in non-food rewards during school and decrease in food rewards.
- Proportion of lunchtime given to social time.

Communication

Consider:

- Has the policy been ratified by the Board of Management?
- How and when will you communicate the policy to the whole school community?
- Will you display the policy around the school? Include in a school newsletter/website?
- How will you communicate with new students and staff joining the school?
- What about others providing food in the school? e.g. parents, food providers.
- Communication should be an on-going process.

Implementation

Details of how the policy will be implemented should be outlined here:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?

Actions to take if the policy is not supported

It is important to plan ahead and decide on what actions you will take if the policy is ignored. If stakeholders were consulted during the development of the policy then they are more likely to support it. Focus your energies on the elements of the policy over which you have control e.g. curriculum, food provision etc.

The intention is that every child will bring a healthy lunch, but this may not happen. Focus on providing information on healthy lunches and rewarding and recognising good food choices in the lunchbox.

Remember that both the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and the Healthy Lifestyle Circular 13/2016 support the schools work in this area.

Review and Evaluation

Decide how often your team will review and update the policy. You can use the 'Policy Review Checklist' to help you decide what changes might be needed. You might look at how effective the policy has been by repeating the audit or the surveys.

AUDIT

Electronic format available online at www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing

CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT			
1	Where do the children eat lunch?		
2	Is there a staff lunch rota? Does this work effectively?	Yes Yes	No No
3	Do staff and children have enough time to eat lunch?	Yes	No
4	Can children sit with friends?	Yes	No
5	Where are lunchboxes stored?		
6	Do children view any screens (e.g. movies) whilst lunch is eaten?	Yes	No
7	Do staff eat with pupils?	Yes	No
8	Are staff role models for healthy eating?		
9	Is the staffroom a supportive environment for healthy eating? Comment:	Yes	No
10	Are children encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating? Please outline the hand washing facilities and hand washing procedures practised in your school:	Yes	No
11	Are children encouraged to drink water and have water bottles with them in class? Comment:	Yes	No
12	Is there access to drinking water throughout the day?	Yes	No
13	Does your school avail of the EU Schools Milk Scheme?	Yes	No
14	Are children allowed drinks other than milk and water? If so give details:	Yes	No
15	Do ice cream or fast food vans park outside the school?	Yes	No

16	<p>Do you allow treats to be given out, served or awarded in the classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Fridays • On birthdays • When someone comes back from holidays • On school trips • On holidays and religious celebrations • On sports days • For academic achievement • For good behaviour • Other <p>Please comment:</p>		
17	Does your school grow fruits or vegetables?	Yes	No
18	Do you encourage waste disposal or food composting for waste foods at school?	Yes	No
19	<p>Does your school provide a breakfast club?</p> <p>If yes, how are healthy food and drinks promoted and provided?</p> <p>If no, do you feel there is a need for a breakfast club, and what are the barriers to setting up a breakfast club in your school?</p>	Yes	No
20	<p>Do you have after school clubs?</p> <p>If yes, how are healthy food and drinks promoted and provided?</p>	Yes	No
CURRICULUM (TEACHING AND LEARNING)			
1	Is healthy eating adequately addressed in SPHE in all classes?	Yes	No
2	Do staff attend continuing professional development to update their skills, knowledge and understanding of healthy eating?	Yes	No
3	If there is already a healthy eating policy in your school? Is it referred to in the classroom?	Yes	No
POLICY AND PLANNING			
1	Do you have an existing policy for food or healthy eating in your school? (if you answer no proceed to question 7)	Yes	No
2	Is this existing policy visible in the school?	Yes	No

HEALTHY EATING POLICY TOOLKIT

3	Describe how the policy is disseminated:		
4	Was the whole school community consulted when developing the policy?	Yes	No
5	Has the policy been reviewed since it was developed?	Yes	No
6	How is the policy communicated and promoted to children, staff and parents?		
7	Does your school have strategies in place to address behaviour and bullying specifically linked to food and lunchtime activities? If yes please describe:	Yes	No
8	Does your school provide information or training to inform staff and parents of food related issues? If yes please expand:	Yes	No
9	Does your school have procedures in place to address special dietary needs e.g. food allergy? Briefly outline:	Yes	No
10	Are other areas linked to food adequately addressed e.g. oral health, physical activity, emotional health etc? Please expand:	Yes	No

11	<p>Does this policy align itself closely to other school policies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum policies such as science, PE, SPHE through which healthy eating messages are taught. • Teaching and learning policy, recognising that well-nourished and hydrated pupils can learn effectively. • Behaviour management policy which identifies the link between food and behaviour and sets out reward systems used within the school. <p>Please describe:</p>
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RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

1	<p>Is support provided for pupils, parents and/or staff on the topic of healthy eating?</p> <p>If yes, please give details.</p>	Yes	No
2	If you have a healthy eating policy already, are the extracurricular activity providers implementing the policy?	Yes	No
3	If your school avails of the School Meals Programme, does the provider adhere to the Nutrition Standards for School Meals?	Yes	No
4	Are children consulted on the food provided as part of the School Meals Programme?	Yes	No
5	<p>Is your school involved in any food related initiatives e.g. Food Dudes</p> <p>If so give details</p>		
6	Does the school foster partnerships with local health services e.g. public health, dental services etc and other organisations in line with SPHE guidelines regarding visitors to schools (Circular 0022/2010).	Yes	No

Any other relevant information you would like to include:

CHILDRENS SURVEY – SAMPLE

Electronic format available online at www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing

1. What did you have to drink in school today?

- Milk Water Juice
Fizzy Drink Tea or Coffee



2. Did you have a sandwich, wrap or roll?

- Yes No

3. Have you eaten fruit at school today?

- Yes No

4. Have you eaten anything from the top shelf of the food pyramid at school today e.g. crisps, chocolate, cakes, buns, bars or sweets?

- Yes No

5. What else was in your lunch box?

6. Name one thing you like about lunch in school?

7. Is there anything that you do not like about lunch in school?

PARENTS LETTER – SAMPLE

Electronic format available online at www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are currently developing a/reviewing our healthy eating policy. The aim of the policy is to help us develop an environment that is conducive to promoting healthy eating choices in our school. This forms part of our Wellbeing Promotion Process. Please find enclosed our draft policy, which was put together by a team of school staff, pupils and parents. We would welcome parents and carers feedback on this. We invite you to fill in the enclosed questionnaire.

You can find information on current healthy eating guidelines on <http://www.healthyireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/>. For information on healthy eating and active living for families you can visit www.makeastart.ie

You can post your responses directly to the school or you can give it to your child to bring to school by DATE HERE.

When we finalised our healthy eating policy we will contact you again to update you.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours Sincerely

PARENTS FEEDBACK – SAMPLE

We do not want our policy to be a list of ‘Do’s’ and ‘Don’ts’ about food. The following are some of the elements that have been considered in the policy

- What learning takes place about healthy eating in class.
- Having a suitable environment to eat lunch at school.
- Providing healthy lunches/snacks, encouraging children to have a healthy breakfast.
- The use of non-food treats as rewards in class and school.
- Food provided at school and catering for celebrations, sports days, parents association meetings.

1. Do you support the development and implementation of the enclosed Draft healthy eating policy?	
Yes	No
If no please comment:	
If yes, please comment:	
2. What eating habits and school practices around food do you think should be promoted in our policy?	
3. Any other comments?	
Thank you for filling out this questionnaire.	
Please return it to the school by XXXXXXX	

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE – SAMPLE

Electronic format available online at www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing

The school is working to develop a Healthy eating policy. We would really appreciate your honest answers and comments on the draft policy. Your response will be anonymous and confidential.

The following questions will help you in your feedback on the draft policy;

1. Do you support the school having a healthy eating policy?	
Yes	No
If no, please comment	
2. In your opinion, does the school environment support children to eat healthily?	
Yes	No
Please comment giving any suggestions for improvement:	
3. Do staff support healthy eating amongst children?	
Yes	No
If so how?	
4. Do you cover healthy eating as per the SPHE curriculum?	
Yes	No
5. What more could the school do to promote healthy eating amongst the whole school community?	
Students	
Staff	
Parents	
6. Any other suggestions on how we can promote healthy eating across the whole school community?	

POLICY REVIEW CHECKLIST

As you review your healthy eating policy, consider the following:

Is our policy working?

- Have there been positive changes in eating habits and attitudes to food since we last reviewed our healthy eating policy?
- Have any aspects of the policy caused difficulties for students/ staff/ parents?

How do we communicate our policy?

- Is our policy clearly displayed in the school and are parents, staff, pupils made aware of it regularly?
- Have we consulted with children, parents and staff during the review of this policy?
- What are the methods used to consult with the school community?
- Do we discuss our policy with those providing food in the school? e.g. lunches, those organizing school celebrations/parents association meetings/fundraisers/sports days, etc.
- Are there any ways in which our school could link more with parents and the local community to encourage healthy eating?

What we eat at school?

- Do we encourage healthy options in line with the food pyramid for all food eaten at school? e.g. lunches (from home or provided by a company, for students and staff) breakfast clubs/afterschool clubs, etc?
- Does the food provided under the School Meals Programme meet the Nutritional Standards for School Meals?
- Do we have a 'treat day' where students bring foods/drinks from the top shelf of the food pyramid each week? If yes, do you think that this is necessary?

How we use food at school?

- Does our policy cover the use of food for classroom rewards, school celebrations, school sponsorship/ community events, sports days, etc?
- Do we encourage learning and discussion around food and nutrition in the classroom?

How healthy is our school environment?

- Do children use screens whilst eating lunch if it is raining? If yes, what could be an alternative?
- Do children and staff eat their lunch in a clean and comfortable place and do they have sufficient time?
- Does the whole school environment support healthy eating for all? (e.g. eating areas for lunch, tuck shop, garden, waste disposal, nearby food outlets, etc.)
- What, if anything, does not support healthy eating in and around the school environment? (consider above points).

So what needs to change?

Let's think about our answers so far - what changes would we now like to make in our policy for the future?

HEALTHY REWARDS

Using food as a reward:

- Rewarding good behaviour with food contradicts the messages given as part of the curriculum.
- Food rewards can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety clues and encourages them to eat when they are not hungry.
- It encourages eating outside of normal meal times and can contribute to tooth decay.

Alternatives to food rewards

- Asking children to come up with alternatives to food rewards will give you lots of ideas.
- Social rewards which involve attention, praise or thanks are often more highly valued than food.

RECOGNITION	
Certificate or sticker acknowledging a 'great job'	Photo recognition board in a prominent place in the school
Recognise achievement on the noticeboard, website or through school announcements.	Phone call or note to parents
PRIVILEGES	
Choosing a class activity.	Teaching the class.
Helping a teacher/member of staff.	Making deliveries to the office.
Extra playtime.	Designing a class bulletin board.
Homework pass.	Reading school announcements.
Show and tell time.	Sitting on special chair or beanbag.
REWARDS FOR THE CLASS	
Golden time.	A book read aloud to the class.
Listening to music during lunch.	Playing a game or doing puzzles together.
Dancing or physical activity time.	Eating lunch or class time outdoors.
STATIONARY, SPORTS GEAR, TOYS	
Frisbees	Skipping ropes
Stickers	Marbles
Step counters	Pencils
Stencils/stamps	Colouring books

Ideas from other teachers . . .

'I have the children earn letters to spell 'Game Day'. After the letters have been earned we play board games or have extra PE time. The children beg for 'Game Day'.

'I give my children 30 minutes at the beginning of the week and they can earn or lose free time according to their behaviour. I use a timer and add time when their behaviour is good. Adding time is very effective'

HEALTHY EVENTS

The number of birthdays and holidays in every school can mean that foods high in fat, salt or sugar can become regular snacks rather than occasional treats. Consider the following ideas to help parents and school staff. Think beyond food when it comes to celebrating birthdays and holidays.

Birthdays

- Single out the birthday child with a ‘VIP’ badge or crown.
- Sing Happy Birthday to them.
- Allow the birthday child to be the first to do each classroom activity or be the line leader for the day.

Christmas

Focus on community outreach:

- Decorate pillowcases for a homeless shelter.
- Make Christmas cards for a nursing home or day centre.

Easter

- Decorate plastic or rubber eggs with paints, stickers and glitter.
- Hide small toys or coins inside plastic eggs for Easter egg hunting.
- Fill Easter baskets with books, art supplies, washable stuffed animals or other small trinkets.

Halloween

- Encourage the children to on wearing their costumes and maybe put on a play.
- Explore the history and legends behind Halloween.

Valentine’s day

- Invite children to write down one positive comment about each classmate and pass them out as Valentines.
- Ask children to write poems and read them aloud to the class. Vote on the best one and have a Valentines Assembly showing each classroom winner.

HEALTHY EATING RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

Start Campaign

www.makeastart.ie

A campaign to inspire and support parents to start building and persisting with healthy lifestyle habits.

- Booklet for parents/carers with tips and advice on how to create a healthy lifestyle for your children.
- Healthy lunchbox leaflet.
- 5 day meal plan.
- Posters on breakfast, dinner and snacks.

Order resources from **www.healthpromotion.ie**

Resources by class

Junior – Senior Infants

- ‘When Sally met Sammy’ & ‘Sammy & Sally grow together’ – storybooks from Safefood
- ‘Clean hands’ song activity to promote handwashing – from Safefood
- ‘Mediawise’ an online resource to develop children’s media literacy skills – from Safefood
- ‘Seedlings’ programme – from Bord Bia
- ‘Mighty Mouth school programme’ from Dental Health Foundation
- Food Dudes – healthy eating activities for all ages.

1st-2nd Class

- ‘Tastebuds’ CD/online resource for 8-10yrs – from Safefood
- ‘Seedlings’ programme – from Bord Bia
- ‘Moo Crew’ activities on dairy foods – from National Dairy Council
- Food Dudes – healthy eating activities for all ages
- ‘Mediawise’ an online resource to develop children’s media literacy skills – from Safefood

3rd-4th Class

- ‘Tastebuds’ CD/online resource for 8-10yrs – from Safefood
- ‘Hands of doom’ drama kit promoting handwashing – from Safefood
- ‘Moo Crew’ activities on dairy foods – from National Dairy Council
- Food Dudes – healthy eating activities for all ages
- ‘Mediawise’ an online resource to develop children’s media literacy skills – from Safefood

5th-6th Class:

- ‘Hands of doom’ drama kit promoting handwashing – from Safefood
- ‘Mediawise’ an online resource to develop children’s media literacy skills – from Safefood
- ‘Moo Crew’ activities on dairy foods – from National Dairy Council
- Food Dudes – healthy eating activities for all ages

HEALTHY EATING RESOURCES

Healthy Food for Life – the Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid

<http://www.healthyireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/>

The Department of Health keeps dietary recommendations under review as part of its role in promoting evidence based public health. As part of this review, the new Healthy Food for Life – the Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid have been developed by the Department working in partnership with other experts in nutrition in Ireland. Healthy Food for Life is a toolkit which includes the updated Food Pyramid and guidance materials to help people make choices to maintain a healthy, balanced diet. The resources reflect best national and international evidence and advice. The guidance applies for everyone from 5 years of age upwards.

The three key messages are:

- Limit high fat, sugar and salt foods from the top shelf of the Pyramid to no more than once or twice a week
- Eat more fruit and vegetables, at least 5 to 7 servings a day
- Use the Pyramid as a guide for serving sizes and remember that portion size matters

www.healthpromotion.ie

1. ‘Your Guide to Healthy Eating Using the Food Pyramid’. The revised food pyramid for children aged 5 years and up and adults is explained in this leaflet.
2. Adults and Children’s Food Pyramid posters and stickers
3. START your child on a healthy lifestyle booklet.
4. Booklet for parents/guardians with tips and advice on how to create a healthy lifestyle for your children.

Support to Schools in ‘Managing Chronic Health Conditions at School’

This resource is aimed at helping teachers and parents manage students with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma and anaphylaxis. It gives guidance on how to provide a safe environment for these students by the development of school guidelines, providing sample forms and letters as well as practical emergency plans for the classroom.

A copy can be downloaded at:

www.anaphylaxisireland.ie/downloads/ManagingChronicHealthConditonsatSchool.pdf

Safefood

Helpline: 1850404567

E-mail: info@safefood.eu

www.safefood.eu

This organization has a focus on schools' education around food safety/ hygiene and promotion of healthy eating. It has a number of resources including: Healthy eating, Food labelling, Food safety, Food hygiene and Handwashing.

- **Start Campaign:** www.makeastart.ie Offers families a number of key messages and practical, achievable tips to help make healthier lifestyle changes. Parents resources include; reward charts, meal plans, recipes.
- **Mediawise** (Mediawise.ie) is an online media literacy resource to develop children's awareness, understanding and critical thinking skills around media and advertising
- **'Taste Buds'** is an interactive CD and online resource targeting 8-10 year olds to help them learn about the origins and production of food and the importance of eating a balanced diet.
- **'Meeting the animals'** – has tips and resources to prepare for a visit to meet animals on a farm or zoo. Advice from 'Suzie Moo' on how to keep safe and healthy when up close with animals!
- **'When Sally met Sammy'** is a book to be read to junior/ senior infants to introduce healthy eating and a positive attitude to food. The next book in the series 'Sammy and Sally Grow Together' focuses on growing and eating fruit and vegetables.
- **Healthy Lunchbox leaflet** (Irish language version available) provides practical tips on preparing healthy foods and drinks for your child's lunchbox. Download from the website or ring to order.
- **'Clean Hands' and 'Hands of Doom'** – provides fun resources to teach children about handwashing
- **Resources on Childhood Obesity Campaign** (can be ordered on www.healthpromotion.ie)

Bord Bia

Tel: 01 668 5155

E-mail: info@BordBia.ie

www.bordbia.ie

Bord Bia acts as a link between Irish food and drink suppliers and their customers. See the 'Lifestyle' section for recipes and resources to access general information on healthy eating and farmer's markets (makes a good class trip!). This section also has a range of nutrition booklets through the ages under the 'inform' menu. Some examples include:

- **Food Dudes' Healthy Eating Programme** is an award winning curriculum-linked evidence-based healthy eating programme, developed to encourage children to eat more fresh fruit and vegetables. For more information visit www.fooddudes.ie (Irish language resources available).
- **Organic Gardening for Schools DVD** shows teachers and pupils how to plan, build, develop and maintain a school garden using key organic principles and comes complete with downloadable worksheets. For more information visit <https://www.bordbia.ie/lifestyle/resources/organic-gardening-for-primary-schools/>
- **Seedlings Programme** – aims to promote increased consumption of fruit and vegetables and create awareness about Irish horticulture/ agriculture. For more information visit <https://www.bordbia.ie/lifestyle/resources/seedlings-home-page/>
- **Incredible Edibles** - A school project consisting of a fruit and vegetable growing challenge and curriculum linked classroom tasks around healthy eating and awareness of food origin, quality and nutritional value. For more information, visit www.incredibleedibles.ie (Irish language resources available).

Bord Bia also hosts other informative websites, with detailed information and recipes on fresh produce, including:

- www.bestinseason.ie – another great website with classroom activities from Bord Bia to explain what fruit and vegetables are available/‘in season’ in Ireland all year round.
- www.potato.ie – is the one stop shop for all things potatoes. Check out the potato survival kit or recipes section for hints and tips, health and nutrition and information on varieties and more.
- www.justaddmushrooms.com – is a great website to find out more about mushroom varieties, recipes and nutrition.

Agriaware

Tel: 01 4601103

e-mail: info@agriaware.ie

www.agriaware.ie

Agri Aware aims to increase awareness of agriculture and healthy eating through curriculum-linked resources.

- ‘Incredible Edibles’ www.incredibleedibles.ie A school project consisting of a fruit and vegetable growing challenge and curriculum linked classroom tasks around healthy eating and awareness of food origin, quality and nutritional value
- Mobile Farm - AgriAware’s Mobile Farm provides an interactive educational experience for all ages.
- Resources promoting farm/countryside safety.
- ‘Dig In’ Resource Pack- (Irish language version available)
- Farm and Countryside Safety week/ month www.thefamilyfarm.ie.

National Dairy Council – ‘the Moo Crew’

Tel: 01 5224844

Email: info@moocrew.ie

www.moocrew.ie

The National Dairy Council has a new sub site for primary schools on healthy eating with dairy foods. The ‘Moo Crew’ is aimed at 1st- 6th classes with lesson plans, games and worksheets. Further information on dairy and healthy eating can be found on their main website www.ndc.ie along with information on the EU School Milk Programme.

The Dental Health Foundation

Tel: 01 6728870 www.dentalhealth.ie

This website contains advice on healthy eating and caring for children’s teeth. Some useful schools resources include ‘Mighty Mouth’ classroom resource for 5-6 year olds to promote good dental health. Teacher’s guide and classroom activities, posters can be downloaded. (Irish language version available). The ‘Story of the Tooth’ is also available to play on the whiteboard in the classroom.

Resources and Posters are available here www.dentalhealth.ie/resources-for-schools/primaryschool

Healthy Food for All

This cross border Irish Organisation which was in existence from 2006 - 2016 promoted access, availability and affordability of healthy foods for all communities. It focused on tackling food poverty. As part of its legacy, the website has continued to be made available. See the ‘schools’ section. website for relevant resources.

- ‘Good Practice Guide for School Food Initiatives’. Download the guide online: <http://www.safefood.eu/Publications/Consumer-info/A-Good-Practice-Guide-for-School-Food-Initiatives.aspx>
- ‘Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs’ is a resource with ideas on setting up/running/funding your own school breakfast club. Download online: <http://www.safefood.eu/Education/Additional-Information/A-Good-Practice-Guide-for-Breakfast-Clubs.aspx>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This section signposts schools to information produced by reputable Irish agencies on a range of topics that are relevant to your Healthy Eating Policy and which can support schools in the implementation of their policy. However, please note that it is the responsibility of the school to check before use that all information provided is in line with school ethos and policy.

School Meals Programme

The School Meals Programme operated by the Department of Social Protection provides funding towards provision of food services for disadvantaged school children through two schemes. It aims to provide regular, nutritious food to children who are unable, by reason of lack of good quality food, to take full advantage of the education provided for them. Research has shown that inadequate nutrition impacts negatively on children's ability to learn and benefit from education.

Urban School Meals Scheme

www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/School-Meals-Programme

The statutory Urban School Meals Scheme for primary schools is operated by Local Authorities and part-financed by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

Contact your Local Authority for more information.

School Meals Local Projects

www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/School-Meals-Programme

The non-statutory School Meals Local Projects Scheme provides funding directly from the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection to primary schools, secondary schools and local groups and voluntary organisations which operate their own school meals projects.

School Milk Scheme

The School Milk Scheme is EU-subsidised and provides a carton of milk at a very low price to every child registered in participating schools - Montessori, National and Secondary schools alike. The programme is valuable for Irish children, helping to count towards one of their recommended servings from the 'milk, yoghurt and cheese' food group and, as the milk is delivered by local dairies, participation also supports local jobs.

Only pupils at participating schools can receive School Milk, so we would encourage your school to register so that your pupils can benefit. In association with your local dairy, schools that require refrigeration to facilitate participation will be supplied with a free fridge upon registration.

To register your school for the School Milk Scheme or for further information, contact the National Dairy Council on 01-290 2451 or email info@ndc.ie.

Breakfast Clubs - Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs

Breakfast has long been considered the ‘most important meal of the day’. Research has shown that eating a nutritious breakfast has a positive impact on the nutritional intake of children and mediates against obesity. Healthy Food for All was a cross border Irish Organisation which developed a resource ‘Good Practice Guide for Breakfast Clubs’ on all aspects of breakfast clubs. The resource is available to download at <http://www.safefood.eu/Education/Additional-Information/A-Good-Practice-Guide-for-Breakfast-Clubs.aspx>.

Healthy Lunches

Good food habits set early in childhood can last a lifetime. Lunches provide around one third of our daily nutritional needs, so it is important to put some thought and planning into them.

Safefood has a number of excellent resources on healthy lunches. The ‘Healthy Lunchbox’ leaflet provides practical tips on how to prepare a healthy lunch box which will support the whole school food policy. It is available to download at: <http://www.safefood.eu/Publications/Consumer-info/Healthy-lunchboxes.aspx>

Food Allergy

Food Allergy is increasingly becoming a fact of life in schools and can affect your Healthy Eating Policy in terms of food choice. It is important that a care plan is agreed with school, the family of the child/staff member affected and medical profession. It is also important to consider if a whole school ban on the named food allergen is required or if a classroom/staffroom ban is sufficient. This aspect of food policy should also be linked to the school’s health and safety policy.

‘Managing Chronic Health Conditions in Schools’ is a resource aimed at helping teachers and parents manage students with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma and anaphylaxis. It gives guidance on how to provide a safe environment for these students by the development of school guidelines, providing sample forms and letters, as well as practical emergency plans for the classroom. A copy was sent to each school in 2011 and can be downloaded at <http://www.anaphylaxisireland.ie/downloads/ManagingChronicHealthConditiionsatSchool.pdf>.

The Irish Food Allergy Network has a useful document for schools and food allergy available at <http://ifan.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Schools-2017.pdf>. In addition, Safefood also has some useful information on food allergy <http://www.safefood.eu/Allergens/Home.aspx> .



Food Labelling

Understanding food labelling is essential when making food choices. This aspect of the curriculum should be covered as set out by the SPHE guidelines. There are some excellent resources to support classroom/staff/parent learning in relation to food labelling, available on the Safefood website. ‘How they measure up – a simple guide to food labelling’ is available at:

<http://www.safefood.eu/Publications/Consumer-information/How-they-measure-up-A-simple-guide-to-food-labell.aspx>

This information used in conjunction with the Healthy Lunchboxes information supports the school community to make an informed choice about food choice.

Oral Health

Specific information in relation to oral health and food and drink choice is listed in the Safefood Healthy Lunchboxes leaflet referred to above.

The HSE provides a dental health service to schools. Schools are advised to contact their local office for information on specific services provided in the area.

External Speakers

National and international research has consistently shown that the classroom teacher is the best placed professional to work sensitively and consistently with pupils and that s/he can have a powerful impact on influencing pupils’ attitudes, values and behaviour in all aspects of health education in the school setting. If your school chooses to bring in a visitor in relation to SPHE and the healthy eating policy, it is important that they use information that is in line with your policy and the national healthy eating guidelines. We would advise revisiting the new Department of Education and Science Circular, “Best practice guidance for primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with the Department of Education and Skills’ Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice” https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0042_2018.pdf

This circular sets out very clear and comprehensive guidelines for bringing visitors into school in relation to wellbeing. Please note that Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Wellbeing Division, HSE is not in a position to resource individual “talks on healthy eating in schools”. Schools can avail of a range of training that is provided to school staff.

Additional websites to support nutrition education

www.hse.ie/schoolswellbeing

www.healthyireland.ie/health-initiatives/heg/

www.indi.ie

www.irishheart.ie

www.coeliac.ie

www.irishosteoporosis.ie

www.irishanaphylaxis.org

www.bodywhys.ie

www.hse.ie/healthyeating

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetics Institute

The Irish Heart Foundation

The Coeliac Society of Ireland

The Irish Osteoporosis Society

Provides support to those with allergies

National charity for people affected by eating disorders

Key Documents

- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023. Department of Education and Skills.
- Nutrition Standards for School Meals Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and Department of Education and Skills.
- Department of Education and Skills Circular Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Primary Schools 0013/2016





This resource was developed by the HSE Health Promotion & Improvement Schools and Dietetic Team and reviewed by a national working group.

Some of the content of this toolkit was adapted from “Establishing a whole school food policy” -<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/establishing-whole-school-food-policy>

The information in this toolkit is subject to change and it is advisable that schools check any resource content for suitability for own school use.

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