Ashbourne Community National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Version: 0.1

Issue Date: 05/01/ 2026

Version Control

Version	Status	Editor	Amendment	Date
0.1	Draft	Geraldine Lacey Rebecca Tersigni	All Sections	05/01/26

Document Ratification

Function	Title	Version	Date
Board of Management	Chairperson	0.1	29/01/26

Ashbourne Community National School Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale

Lunch is an important meal for children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, salt or sugar. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E) Programme, we also encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes and to understand the need for the need for a healthy eating policy.

Aims:

This aims of this policy are to:

- Provide examples of the foods that are recommended;
- Promote the personal development and well-being of the child;
- Promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living;
- To encourage children to eat sensibly so that they can derive maximum benefit from the teaching and learning opportunities provided in the course of the school day.

Objectives:

- To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and staying healthy.
- To enable the child to understand the reasons for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.
- To enable parents and guardians to make informed choices in helping their children to eat healthily at school.

Culture and Environment:

- The School Meals Programme is provided by "The Lunch Bag" and is available for every child in the school to avail of.
- The menu can be changed regularly through an online portal at home (information available through the office) or by our secretary in the school.
- For families who choose not to avail of the School Meals Programme, parents/guardians 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.
- Teachers will monitor lunches on a daily basis.
- Teachers will keep in touch with parents regularly and inform them if any issues that arise relating to their child's lunch.

Drinking water: Drinking water is widely available in every classroom in our school. Children are asked to bring their own beaker/water bottle to school each day. This beaker/water bottle can be refilled by the class teacher throughout the day if necessary.

Fruit: In our school, we are fortunate to receive additional fruit throughout the week that the children can enjoy during lunchtimes. We receive bags of apples, bananas and satsumas and these are distributed throughout the classes.

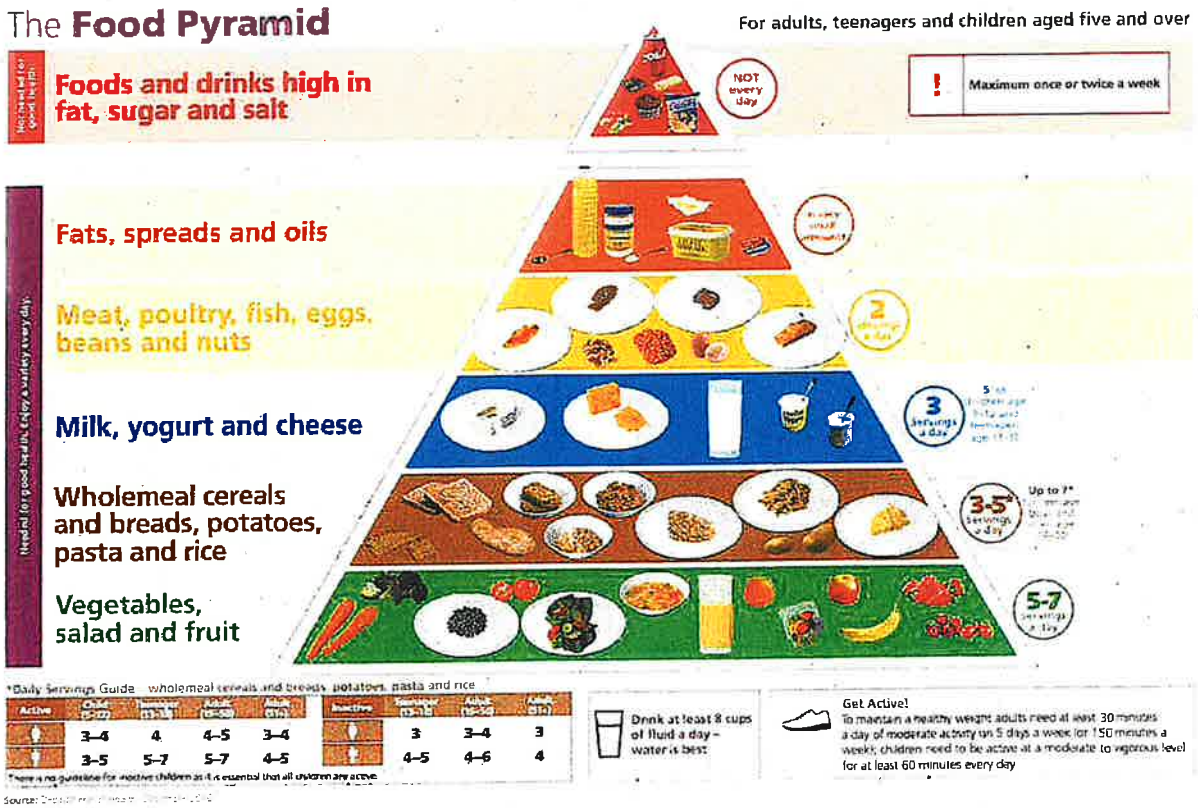
Special Treats: We recognise that there is no such thing as "bad food" and we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation. Special events in class such as end of term parties, special achievements or seasonal

celebrations are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration, community and sharing. On these occasions, special treats may be provided by the teacher, baked/prepared in conjunction with the children and on occasion brought in from home. We will always remind the children however that this is an "occasional" treat and not "everyday food".

Lunchboxes and food waste/recycling: Please ensure that your child has a lunchbox in school with them every day. Please practice opening and closing this lunchbox with your child as many of them can have clips that are difficult for the children to manage. The School Meals programme delivers each child's lunch individually in a paper bag or box but this must then be transferred into a suitable lunchbox each morning when the child receives it in school.

The Food Pyramid

The food pyramid is designed to provide a guideline for healthy eating. Foods that contain a similar amount of nutrients are placed together on the same shelf. Using the food pyramid as a guide for healthy eating will ensure that a balance of nutrients is consumed.



food pyramid professional version.pdf

Resources:

www.safefood.eu
www.healthpromotion.ie/health/healthy_eating
www.enjoyhealthyeating.info/
http://www.netmums.com/family-food/food-for-kids/lunchbox-ideas

Foods and drinks not allowed in school:

- **NUTS and FOODS CONTAINING NUTS are strictly forbidden in Ashbourne CNS as we have children that have serious allergies to them.**
- Fizzy drinks/sweetened fruit juices/ cordials (Mi-Wadi, squash etc.)
- Sweets
- Crisps
- Chocolate bars/biscuits
- **Chewing gum is strictly forbidden**

If a child comes to school with an item that is not allowed in school, he/she will not be allowed to eat this item. A note will be sent home via email as a reminder to adhere to our healthy eating policy.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have a healthy eating policy in our school. (Insert item) is not suitable for a school lunch as it is high in sugar.

Please see our healthy eating policy for some alternative suggestions and ideas.

Special Dietary Requirements:
Parents/guardians of children with special dietary requirements should make an appointment with the principal to discuss the implications of this policy.

Review and Evaluation:

The success of this policy will be judged on:

- The children bringing healthy lunches to school.
- The children becoming aware of healthy/unhealthy foods and drinks.
- The frequency of notes being sent home as a result of unhealthy food present in a lunch box.
- This policy was ratified by Board of Management in January 2026.
- This policy will be reviewed in January 2028.

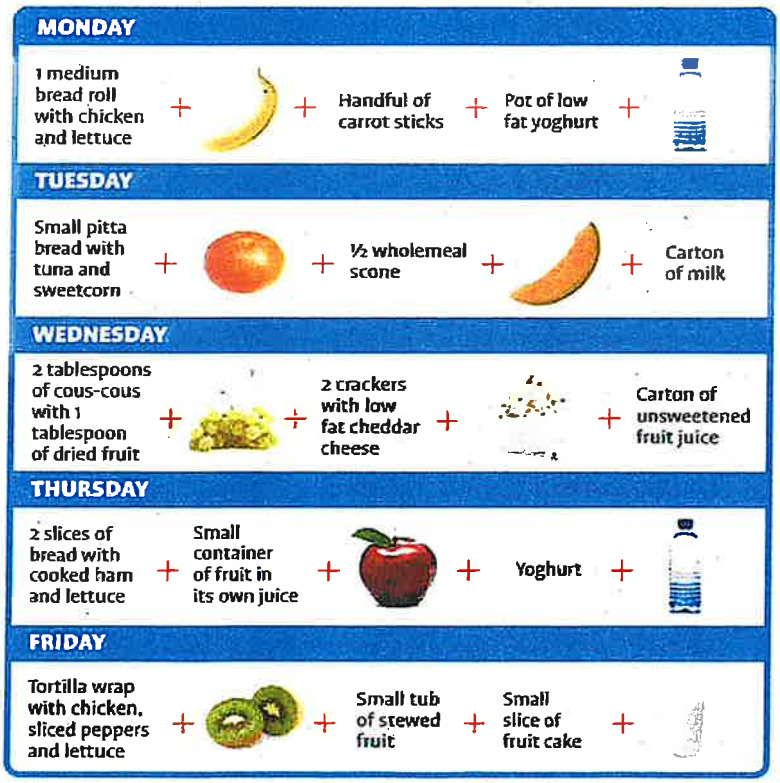
Signed: Chairperson of Board of Management Date: 29/01/2025	Signed: (Principal) Date: 29/01/2025

APPENDIX

Sample Lunch Ideas

The following guide is designed to help provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for children. They are suggestions and the list is by no means exhaustive. If any parent has any good ideas they would like to share, we are always willing to take new ideas on board.

Sample 5 day lunchbox planner from Safefood– Healthy Lunchboxes



Healthy school lunch ideas | Safefood