



## LISNAGRY NATIONAL SCHOOL

### HEALTHY EATING POLICY

#### Introductory Statement

“Children’s eating habits will strongly influence his/her chances of living a healthy life-style”. Children grow and develop at a fast rate. Research indicates a strong link between diet and performance (e.g a low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth and lessens the risk of diabetes). Therefore they need a high quality diet which contains adequate energy, proteins, vitamins, minerals and fibre. The present policy was formulated as a result of a review and updating of the original policy. A copy of this policy will be kept in the school office and may also be viewed and downloaded from the school web-site- [www.lisnagryns.ie](http://www.lisnagryns.ie)

#### Rationale

Our school setting provides an excellent health promotion avenue for reaching a large section of the community: children, families and teachers. Young people spend a large part of their day in school where they eat at least one of their main meals. The home plays the major role in determining healthy eating habits. However the school, in partnership with parents, can make an important contribution. This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A Knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutritional education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in Lisnagry N.S. The following curricular areas are taught in all classes in an effort to promote healthy eating habits and an awareness of healthy foods:

#### SPHE:

- Taking Care of my Body; Food and Nutrition, Making Choices

#### SCIENCE:

- Myself: Human life Processes

#### Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

As part of our overall school policy the Healthy Eating Policy helps to promote the health of each child and to provide a foundation for healthy living. Our school aims to provide a holistic education for our children and health of mind and body is an ideal we aim for among all our pupils.



## Aims

The aims of our policy are:

- To make the “healthier choice the easier choice”
- To promote nutritional awareness e.g. looking at the ingredients in food- what is good or bad
- To positively enable healthy eating among school-age children
- To raise levels of concentration and energy within class through the consumption of healthy food.
- To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children which it is hoped will become lifelong eating habits
- To provide members of staff, parents and those involved in school activities with clear information
- To protect the health and safety of children with serious food allergies
- To support the school’s environmental policy in insisting on reusable containers, minimum use of wrappers etc.

## Content

**1. Food Pyramid:** Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch, which helps to maintain their level of concentration in the classroom throughout the day. A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.



<http://www.safefood.eu/Healthy-Eating/Food-Diet/What-is-a-balanced-diet/The-Food-Pyramid.aspx>

**2. Lunch boxes:** Here are some simple guidelines to help you and your child make that simple choice each day when packing the lunch box for school.

- **Drinks:** water, unsweetened juice or milk- should be in a recyclable plastic bottle (no glass bottles please) which can be refilled every day. Fizzy drinks are NOT allowed.
- Yoghurt in tubs
- Sandwiches/crackers/pitta breads/slimbos/rolls/wraps/rice cakes with a healthy filling- NO chocolate spread please.
- All types of fruit: ( for younger children fruit, where possible, should be peeled and ready to eat)
- All types of vegetables: peppers, cucumber, sweetcorn, celery sticks, carrot sticks.

It is important to remember that each child must be capable of managing all of their lunch by themselves (e.g opening cartons, flasks, drink bottles, lunch box containers). For health and safety reasons hot water for soups etc cannot be supplied.

All new parents received a healthy eating publication/booklet in their induction pack.

There are many more lunchbox tips and suggestions on the HSE website-see our website for links and more details.

### **3. Prohibited Foods:**

In order to encourage healthy, balanced eating habits among children the following foods are prohibited, except on treat days:

- Crisps, sweets, bars, chocolate/chocolate spreads, fizzy drinks, fruit winders, lollipops.
- No nuts, nutella spreads etc due to food allergies.

**4. Treat days:** There may be “treat days”. On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own classes. These may be special occasions such as: End-of-term parties, Halloween, School trips and events, other specific occasions or events that may arise. Although it is a special occasion, treats are not allowed on a child’s birthday. Occasionally, treats may be used as a reward in school.

**5. Green Flag:** As a Green Flag school, we aim to reduce litter and protect our school environment. Please note that all uneaten food, tin foil wrappers, containers and cartons must be taken home in lunch boxes. For safety reasons, cans and glass are not permitted.

**6. Food Dudes:** In the final term of the 2008/2009 school year, Lisnagry National School took part in a Healthy Eating Programme entitled “Food Dudes”. This was sponsored by An Bord Bia and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the scheme received a “counteracting obesity” award from the WHO.

Through the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption, the Food Dudes programme encourages children to enjoy a healthy diet, and it reinforces the healthy eating culture which has prevailed for many years in the school. The programme was a huge success and Lisnagry National School intends to encourage children to pursue and continue the positive eating habits engendered by the programme in forthcoming years.

**7. Healthy Eating Committee:** We have a Healthy Eating Committee made up of teachers and students who help promote healthy eating initiatives in the school and committee members communicate ideas from the committee meetings to their own classes.

**8. Healthy Eating Slogan:** Our healthy eating slogan is *“Eat fruit and veg in Lisnagry, then good health won’t pass you by”*. We hold competitions in all classes each year to design a poster to illustrate our healthy eating slogan. The winning pictures are displayed on the Healthy Eating Notice Board.

**9. Guest Speaker:** We plan to invite guest speakers to come to the school to discuss the benefits of healthy eating with the children.

### **Implementation of the Policy**

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as they are not permitted to eat “junk” in school. If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher and principal will organise a meeting with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

### **Success Criteria:**

We will know the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods
- The feedback from parents/guardians and other school staff
- The level of concentration and performance of children in the classroom

### **Roles and Responsibility:**

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include variety.

It is also extremely important for parents to note that a breakfast before children come to school is vital to help concentration.

Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others. This is extremely important particularly with regards to children who suffer from severe nut allergies.

Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy eating habits.

The whole school community- staff, parents/guardians, children will work together to promote the progress of this policy.

All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on its performance which will be reported back as appropriate to the Principal and staff.

The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the Board of Management .

**Timeframe for Implementation:**

January 2014

**Timeframe for review:**

January 2016

**Useful Information:**

The Health Promotion unit has a booklet called "Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary Schools". It is available to download from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch-boxes. [www.indi.ie](http://www.indi.ie)

The Voluntary Health Insurance website (VHI) has a section on children returning to school after sickness which includes advice on healthy lunches [www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-011.jsp](http://www.vhi.ie/hfiles/hf-011.jsp)

**Ratification and Communication:**

The BoM ratified the policy at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 after it had been drafted, circulated to the Parents Association for input and then amended. The policy has been communicated to all staff and children, and has been uploaded on to the school web-site. It will be promoted in the school as part of the SPHE policy and its importance will be stressed in newsletters.