Ballinadee National School Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement
Ballinadee National School aims to help children, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

Rationale:
This policy is intended as a guide to healthy 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 nutrition education is an important element of the curriculum in Ballinadee N.S.
SPHE: Strand Unit: Taking Care of my Body; Food and Nutrition Making Choices.
SCIENCE: Strand: Living Things : Strand Unit: 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 in all our pupils.

Aims:
The aims of our policy are:
- To make "the healthier choice, not the easier choice"
- 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 support the school's environmental policy in insisting on reusable containers, minimum use of wrappers etc.

Content:

Healthy Eating at School Breaks:

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.

Food Recommendations:

Wholesome, nourishing food is recommended for every child's wellbeing.

Drinks:

Water, milk, smoothies (which should preferably be in a recyclable plastic bottle (no glass bottles please) which can be refilled every day. Fizzy drinks are NOT allowed.

Foods that are Discouraged:

Sweets, chocolate, cans, glass bottles, fizzy drinks & crisps are discouraged. Chewing gum is strictly forbidden.

We will advise if peanuts and peanut products are to be excluded from lunchboxes if a child has an allergy.

Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment. Cans and glass bottles are not allowed for safety and litter reasons.

We recommend that children take home wrappers and unfinished food.

Treat Friday :

Friday is our 'Treat Day'. On a treat day parents/guardians may give a treat (treat size chocolate bar, jellies, small portion of popcorn etc) to their child.

6th Class will sell homemade treats on Fridays; children may buy these treats instead of bringing their own.

Teachers may give treats to their own class on special occasions. These may be occasions such as:

- End-of-term parties
- Halloween
- Other specific occasion or event
- Although it is a special occasion treats are not allowed on a child's birthday.

How Our School Encourages Healthy Eating:

- Healthy eating lessons are taught in SPHE & Science lessons.
- Occasionally children are involved in cooking and baking in the school.
- Children help with planting a small selection of vegetables and herbs in the school garden.

Teachers encourage children to eat their lunches. They cannot force a child to eat. Problems with lunches can only be resolved by parent and child.

Implementation:

If children consistently bring unhealthy food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as it is discouraged to eat unhealthy foods in school. If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher will speak with the child in the first instance and subsequently their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all parents do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the families who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see others getting treats everyday.

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.

Roles and Responsibility:

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which include a variety of healthy foods

- Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not to share or trade food or drink with others
- 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.

This policy was reviewed in _____

Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed:  Date: 22/9/2026

John Twomey (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Linda Harte Date: 22/9/2026

Linda Harte (Principal)