

Drumahoe Primary School



Policy for Healthy Eating

Healthy Eating Policy

Drumahoe Primary School has adopted a Healthy Eating Policy in a response to concerns raised by both staff and parents to the quality of the food eaten by children. It has been developed over a number of years with input from parents, staff, outside agencies and the children.

Our policy promotes the following:

- Fizzy drinks are discouraged in school;
- Children are encouraged to drink water, fruit juice and milk;
- Water is encouraged throughout the school day, particularly during class;
- We participate in the “Smart Snacks” scheme (see below) aimed at our Breaktime;
- We participate in the “Munch Box Challenge” scheme(see below) aimed at our pupils who take packed lunch.

Over the last number of years, we very successfully adopted a Healthy Break Policy and achieved the “Smart Snack Award” and the Gold Award in the Health Promoting Schools Scheme for our efforts.

The benefits for our children and positive feedback we received from parents have encouraged us to continue implementing this scheme - we have less litter in our playground and increased appetites at lunchtime, which has greatly reduced food wastage. We now have pupils who routinely include a healthy snack in their diet.

The Smart Snack Award set down criteria for us to follow. We recommend our mid-morning break to be fruit, vegetables and water. The eating of other healthy foods e.g. cheese and yoghurts are also considered appropriate if the pupil prefers these to fruit or vegetables.

N.B. We also currently have a pupil in our school who has a severe food allergy to peanuts/nuts. It is important that there is strict avoidance of this food in order to prevent a life-threatening allergic reaction. Examples of some types of foods that children should avoid bringing to school are listed below:

- Any type of nuts
- Fruit cereal bars containing nuts eg Tracker bars, Alpen bars etc. (check the wrapper for ALLERGY ADVICE)
- Nutella spread
- Peanut butter spread
- Bags of nuts
- Bags of fruit and nuts
- Coconut
- Chocolate eg Cadburys Fruit and Nut or Whole nut or Toblerone Fruit and Nut

Our school dinner menu is in line with the Nutritional Standards. All children receive a copy of this menu and it rotates on a four week cycle.

For packed lunches we participate in the “Munch Box Challenge” (see below).

Good food habits should be encouraged in children from an early age, as this is a time of rapid growth and development. There is growing concern throughout Northern Ireland about what our children are eating. Compared to recommended dietary guidelines, many children are consuming too much fat, sugar and salt and too little fibre.

Good nutrition is essential to:

- Allow children to reach their full potential
- Encourage healthy eating patterns from early on in life
- Protect against decaying of the teeth
- Prevent against long-term health problems, e.g. obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease, osteoporosis and cancers

We as a school are working to promote healthy eating habits and improve oral health in children, through the implementation and maintenance of The Healthy Munch Box Challenge (a Lunch Box Initiative) and we have obtained an Award for our school in previous years.

The challenge suggests that at lunch time the children's lunch boxes should consist of at least one healthy portion from each of the four main food groups listed below and children should be encouraged to reduce their daily fat, sugar and salt intake.

- Bread, Cereals and Potatoes
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Milk and Dairy Foods
- Meat, fish and Alternatives

The School's Board of Governors are committed to this challenge and we encourage our parents to support the school's Healthy Eating policy by sending only healthy food to school with their children.

It is often difficult to provide a healthy lunch box that is appealing to the child. For the benefit of parents we distribute a leaflet at Induction (P1) with a selection of ideas to aid in the preparation of a healthy lunch. Also included are tips on the safe preparation and storage of food in the lunch boxes.

With the continual rise in obesity throughout our community, we feel our children will greatly benefit from the Healthy Munch Box Challenge and "Smart Snacks" scheme in the long term.

Other initiatives promoted by this policy include:

- Terms 1-3 – we operate a Breakfast Club.
- Terms 1-3 – the school provides fruit free of charge to Years 1-4 to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Dates 2000 to current - awarded the Smart Snack Award
- Dates from 2007 to current awarded the Munch Box Challenge
- Gold Award in the Health Promoting Schools Scheme - 2009