

Teachers are permitted to give sweets as treats on special occasions, e.g. – end of term, Christmas, Competitions etc.



Criteria for success

We consider this policy to be successful from monitoring the results of:

- Classroom observation
- Classroom discussion
- Uptake of fruit
- Continued support of pupils, parents and teachers.

This policy was first drawn up in November 2002 and implemented soon after. It has been reviewed and revised, May 2006 by a sub committee, and presented to whole staff for discussion, amendment and acceptance.



*Bunscoil na Trócaire,
Biorra, Co. Uibh Fháilí.*



**Mercy Primary School,
Birr, Co. Offaly.**

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

The development of our Healthy Eating Policy involved management, teachers, students and parents.

In 2002/03 a committee was formed to include pupils, parents, teachers and a dietician from the then Midland Health Board nos the H.S.E.. A Healthy Eating Policy was drawn up by the committee and presented to all members of the school community.

6th Class pupils, in conjunction with the dietician, presented the policy to the more junior classes.

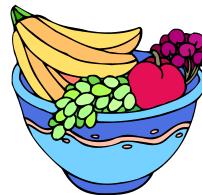
Birr Urban Council in liaison with the Department of Social and Family Affairs sponsor the provision of fruit (apples, oranges and bananas) to classes from Junior Infants to 2nd inclusive and Class 7. The fruit is prepared and distributed to each classroom by volunteer parents organised by the Home School Community Liaison Officer.



A leaflet detailing recommended fare for lunchboxes was prepared and distributed to each family. This leaflet is now included in the Welcome Pack given to all Junior Infants. It is also given to any new pupils.

Definition:

This school defines a healthy lunch as consisting of generally unprocessed plain food, that is currently accepted by nutritional experts as being optimal for growth, development and health.



Rationale

Concern for children's health:-

- To educate children about good choices as regards their health, specifically good food choices.
- In accordance with our ethos, (See School Dev. Plan) we consider a healthy eating policy to be necessary in order to enable each child to achieve her full potential.

Aims:

- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet.
- To encourage the children to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre-prepared food, juice cartons etc.



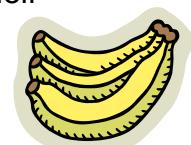
Guidelines:

Lessons on Healthy Eating are incorporated into SPHE and Science early in the school year in all classes and revised periodically.

Sos : (10.50-11.00) All children from Junior Infants to 5th and Class 7 are offered a piece of prepared fruit every day of the week. All children are allowed to eat small portion of their lunch in the yard and/or have a small drink before exiting the classroom. No yoghurt is permitted at break time (including frubes).

Lón: (12.30-1.00)

The children eat their lunch at their desks at 12.15 while the teacher continues to deliver the curriculum. This usually takes the form of listening to TnaG, story, music etc. Children are encouraged to have a lunchbox in order to discourage excess wrapping. No glass bottles are permitted. Screw top plastic bottles are encouraged. Children may drink water any time in class.



The eating of nuts is not allowed in school.

All litter is taken home in the lunchbox. Any uneaten food is taken home so that parents are aware of their child's preferences and eating habits.



When the 12.30 bell rings, any unfinished sandwiches, popcorn or fruit can be brought to the playground and finished. Volunteers from 5th Class take turns to collect popcorn bags, apple cores, banana peels. Drinks are not permitted in the yard. Children are not allowed to eat popcorn in the classroom. Popcorn may only be eaten in the yard.

The Principal is always available to meet with any parent expressing concern or disagreement with this policy. Children bringing unsuitable foods to school are encouraged to keep them for treats after school. If necessary, crackers, fruit and water will be provided.



HEALTHY LUNCHES - SOME SUGGESTIONS

Sandwich or roll with anything in it. Bread of any type, e.g. cracker, brown/white, pitta bread. Scones. Any piece of fruit. Small tin/carton of fruit.

Milk/fruit juice, drink of water. Finger of raw vegetables, e.g. carrots, cucumbers. Box of raisins. Pasta with tuna. Yoghurts, cheese slices, cheese strings, popcorn.

Yoghurts to be eaten in classroom, sandwich or fruit or other can be brought in hand to yard. No yoghurts or drinks on yard.

Pupil can have a drink of water from plastic bottle at any time during the school day.

In order to keep refuse costs at a minimum, pupils bring home packaging and uneaten food in their lunch box.

Note: Thanks to Birr Town Council (for funding) and Parents (for preparing), Junior Infants – 2nd class get a portion of fruit everyday at sos.

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Rationale for eating in classroom

From 12.15 p.m. – 12.30 p.m.

1. Healthy Eating Policy

H.E.P. was devised in conjunction with parents, staff, children, B.O.M. and H.S.E. Eating in the classroom affords the teacher the opportunity of observing the implementation of this policy. Teachers can check that children are actually eating their lunches. Parents become aware of their children's eating habits, as what is not eaten goes home in lunch box.

2. Premises

We have no suitable premises for eating outside of the classroom. (P.E. room not big enough – insufficient seating and no tables in either P.E. room or shed).

3. Health and Safety

A river runs directly behind the school and this presents an ongoing threat from rats, which have been observed in the schoolyard during the school day.

This has been brought to the attention of Birr Town Council, the Environmental Officer of the Health Board and Offaly County Council but to date no remedy has been found. The Board of Management has engaged Rentokil in an attempt to control rodent infestation.

4. Environmental Protection and Awareness

Eating lunch in the classroom has eliminated all litter from the schoolyard and has taught the children how to dispose of litter correctly. (See Healthy Eating Policy)

5. Disadvantaged Status

We have become aware that many children in our school do not have the opportunity to have stories read to them or to listen to a wide variety of music. As a staff we feel that the curriculum is

overloaded, therefore we feel that this 10 minutes of eating time, rather than taking from curriculum time is actually adding to the children's Arts Education Programme. This is a highly structured use of time. We are also ensuring that children are learning proper table manners and social graces.