

Gortaleam NS Healthy Eating Policy

The aims of the policy are to:

- Promote an awareness of the importance of balanced nutrition.
- Positively affect healthy eating among school-age children.
- Raise levels of concentration within class through the consumption of healthy food.
- Support and encourage healthy eating habits in children, which is hoped will become lifelong habits.
- To encourage positive involvement from parents in their child's nutrition.
- To promote personal well-being and confidence through nutrition, activity and dental hygiene.
- **This policy is not labelling foods as “good” or “bad” but rather promoting food that aids children's learning and activity in school. It is important to acknowledge that there is a place for all foods in a balanced diet.**

“The eating experience provides not only sustenance but also an opportunity for learning. It affects not only children's physical growth and health but also their psychosocial and emotional development.”

[Feeding Behaviour of Infants and Young Children and Its Impact on Child Psychosocial and Emotional Development](#) Yi Hui Liu & Martin T. Stein, 2013, University of California San Diego

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

The BOM oversees the development, implementation and review of school policy on Healthy Eating.

Principal:

The school principal should

- Implement and monitor the school's Healthy Eating policy on an on-going basis.
- Ensure that whole-school procedures are established to facilitate the effective involvement of parents, pupils and external professionals/agencies
- Facilitate the continuing professional development of all teachers in relation to Healthy Eating, and ensure that all school staff (class teachers, special education teachers and special needs assistants) are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area
- Inform staff about external agencies and provide information on continuing professional development in the area of Healthy Eating. Class Teacher:
- Implement teaching programmes which optimise the learning of all pupils regarding nutrition.

Parents/Guardians:

- It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that their child/children's lunches adhere to the healthy eating policy in place in the school.

Pupils:

- Pupils should strive at all times to adhere to the healthy eating policy in place in the school.

Small Break

The children have an exercise break from 11am to 11:15am. Food at this break should be easy to eat. Children have approximately 10 minutes to eat at this break.

Recommended Foods and Drinks	Not Permitted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, Milk, Cordial • Crackers/Rice Cakes/Breadsticks • Fruit • Meats • Salads • Pasta, Rice, Noodles, Potatoes • Yoghurt • Sandwich/Wrap/Roll • Cereal Bar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fizzy drinks, sports drinks and drinks/juices with high sugar content • Chewing gum • Chocolate • Sweets/Lollipops • Crisps • Biscuits and Cakes • Ice Cream

Lunch Break

The children have their lunch break from 12:35-1pm. The children have ten minutes to eat at this time also.

The Lunch Bag Food Company will provide Hot Lunches free to all children who wish to eat them from April 2024. The table above is to be adhered to from April 2024 if your child does not avail of the programme.

Best Practice

- Ensure your child starts the day with a good breakfast.
- Eat small regular meals, not just one big meal each day.
- Children who exercise each day will have a better appetite for healthy food.

Healthy Eating Initiatives

The curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles through the Science, P.E and SPHE curricula. Our school endeavours to provide a positive modelling and

supportive attitude to encourage healthy eating with initiatives such as Food Dudes and eating vegetables from the School Garden.

Exceptions to the Policy

As a school we acknowledge there are times when it is appropriate to allow children to eat foods that are normally not permitted.

- School Trips
- School Tours
- End of Term Day-Halloween, Easter, Summer.
- Concerts
- Birthday Parties in After-School Club.
- Baking activities in school

*We also acknowledge that some children are “fussy eaters”. In this case we will communicate and work with individual families to support their child’s nutrition needs.

Children with Special Dietary Requirements

Parents must inform the school if their child has special dietary requirements due to health reasons - as determined by medical professionals. Every effort will be made to accommodate these requirements, where absolutely necessary.

The Board of Management will review this policy every second year.

March 2024