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Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

At Scoil Náisiúnta Loch Guir, we are committed to promoting the health and well-being of our students. As part of this commitment, we have developed a healthy eating policy, in consultation with the Parents Association and the full parent body, to encourage nutritious food choices and create a positive environment for learning and growth.

Rationale

Healthy eating plays a crucial role in children's physical and mental development. By promoting healthy food choices through the implementation of this policy and the teaching of Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), we aim to support our students in maintaining good health, improving concentration, and fostering healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

Aims:

1. To provide students with access to nutritious and balanced meals
2. To educate students, parents, and staff about the importance of healthy eating
3. To create a supportive environment that encourages healthy food choices
4. To promote a positive relationship with food and body image

Objectives

1. Offer a variety of healthy options for lunch via the School Meals Programme
2. Provide nutrition education through curriculum integration and workshops
3. Encourage students to drink water and limit sugary beverages

4. Promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins
5. Discourage the consumption of high-sugar, high-fat, and processed foods

DEIS Hot Meals Scheme

As a DEIS rural school, Scoil Náisiúnta Loch Guir qualifies for the Hot Meals Scheme, which provides nutritious meals to students. The scheme aims to improve students' daily diet, attendance, and educational achievement, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The meals follow the Nutrition Standards for School Meals and Healthy Eating Guidelines, ensuring a balanced and healthy offering. The Lunch Bag company provides the daily meals in accordance with these standards, and students can choose from a variety of healthy options.

Examples of Healthy Choices for Lunch (Outside of the Hot Meals Scheme)

1. Whole grain sandwiches with lean protein (e.g., turkey, chicken, or tofu) and plenty of vegetables.
2. Fresh fruit or vegetable sticks as snacks
3. Low-fat yogurt or cheese
4. Water or milk as beverages

Examples of What Children Should Not Include in Their Lunch

1. Sugary drinks like fizzy drinks, energy drinks or juices
2. Processed snacks high in sugar, salt, or unhealthy fats (e.g., crisps, cookies, chocolate, jellies)
3. Foods high in saturated fats (e.g., fried foods, pastries)
4. Foods with excessive added sugars (e.g., sugary cereals, sweetened yogurts)
5. Chewing gum

If children bring these food items to school, parents will be sent a reminder of the school's Healthy Eating policy. The teacher will assess whether the child should be asked to save the treat for home, considering if they have a full lunch and their age.

Treat Day

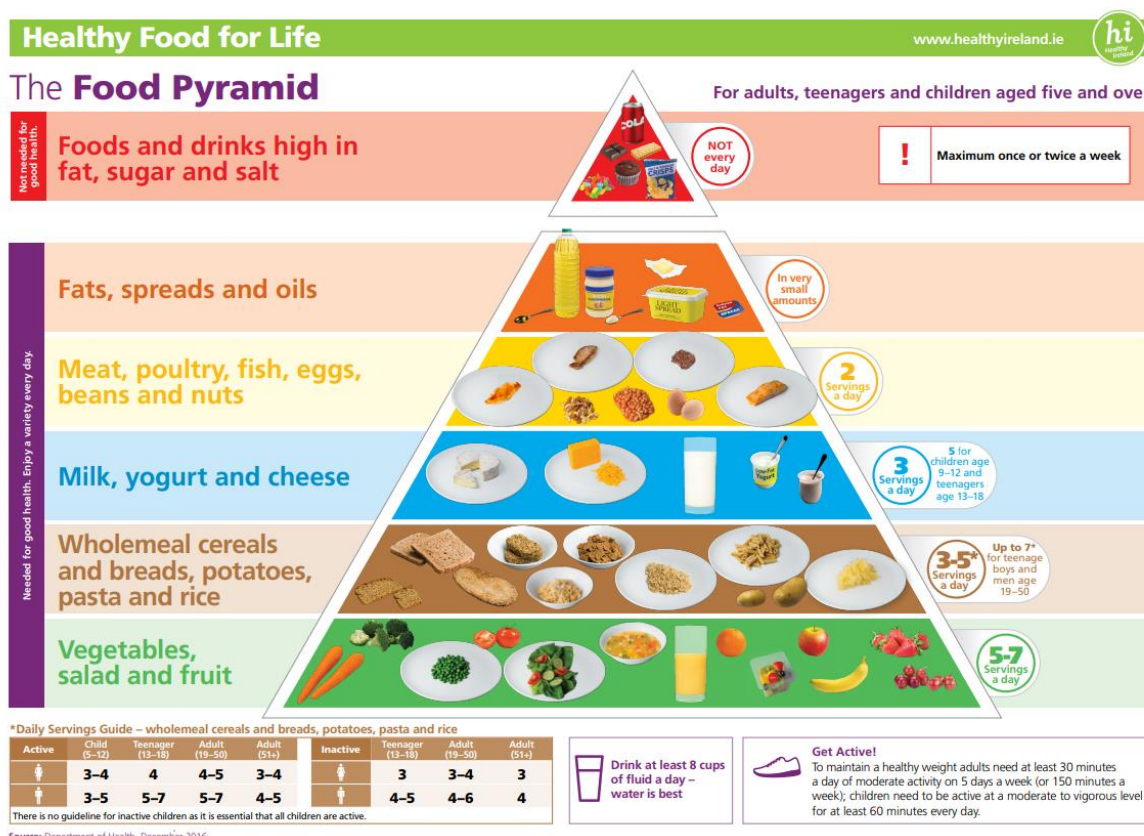
On treat days such as end of term or special occasions, a treat can be sent in with the children. Treats may also be given as occasional rewards to a class.

Special Requirements

Parents / guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet should contact the school.

Resources

A very straightforward approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:



Food pyramid for a five year old boy:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/heal/food-pyramid-images/daily-meal-plan-a4-jakub-age-5.pdf>

Food pyramid for a ten year old girl:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/health/food-pyramid-images/daily-meal-plan-a4-niamh-age-10.pdf>

Healthy lunchbox tips:

<https://www2.hse.ie/file-library/health-eating-active-living/healthy-lunchboxes.pdf>

Conclusion

By implementing and adhering to this healthy eating policy, we aim to create a school environment that supports the overall well-being and academic success of our students.

Ratification

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management of *Scoil Náisiúnta Loch Guir* at its meeting held on *7th May 2024*.

Signed:

Rev. Fr. Edward Cleary

Chairperson, Board of Management