Bandonbridge National School

Healthy Eating Policy

1. Introduction

Bandonbridge National School is committed to promoting healthy eating habits and positive attitudes towards food as part of our whole-school approach to health and wellbeing. We recognise the important role of good nutrition in supporting children's growth, concentration, learning, energy levels and overall physical and emotional wellbeing.

2. Aims

- To encourage healthy, balanced eating habits.
- To promote an understanding of the relationship between nutrition, physical activity and wellbeing.
- To encourage children to make informed and responsible food choices.
- To foster a positive and inclusive attitude towards food and healthy lifestyles.

3. Healthy Lunches and Snacks

Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide nutritious lunches and snacks, including fruit, vegetables, wholegrain foods and other healthy options.

The following guidelines apply:

- Drinks: Water or plain milk only. Fruit juices, flavoured drinks, fizzy drinks, energy drinks and other sugary drinks are not permitted.
- Sweets: Sugary sweets, confectionery and chewing gum are not permitted during the school day, except for the Friday treat outlined below.
- Savoury snacks: Crisps and other salty snacks are not permitted.
- Healthy choices: Fruit, vegetables, yoghurt, sandwiches and other nutritious foods are encouraged.

Birthday cakes or sharing treats are not allowed. In the younger classes, parents might send in a fruit and vegetable platter on a child's birthday. Please speak to the class teacher beforehand.

4. Packaging

As a Green School which teaches sustainability, lunches should be brought in reuseable lunchboxes, and water should come in a refillable water bottle. No prepackaged foods please unless the packaging is reuseable or compostable. All packaging will go home in the child's school bag at the end of the day. The school endeavours to keep its waste to a minimum.

Please ensure your child can open their lunchbox and water bottle independently. It is a parent's responsibility to provide a spoon for yoghurt or other lunch item which requires cutlery.

5. Friday Fun

On Fridays, parents/guardians may choose to include one small sugary treat in their child's lunchbox. This is entirely optional. Children are not expected to bring a treat.

Suitable examples include:

- One biscuit
- A small chocolate bar
- A small cake
- A small portion of low-salt popcorn

6. Food Dudes and Hot School Lunches

Bandonbridge N.S. supports the Food Dudes Programme, encouraging children to enjoy fruit and vegetables and develop healthy eating habits through positive experiences. https://www.fooddudes.ie/

The school participates in the Hot School Meals Programme, providing pupils with access to a nutritious hot lunch during the school day. Parents/guardians are encouraged to select balanced meals from the available menu, taking account of their child's dietary requirements and preferences. All packaging and forks are compostable and go in the compost bins provided in the school.

7. Healthy Eating Across the Curriculum

Healthy eating is promoted through the school's Wellbeing Programme, particularly through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE).

Pupils learn about nutrition, balanced diets, food choices, hydration, physical activity and the importance of healthy lifestyles. These themes are reinforced through classroom discussions, practical activities, Food Dudes initiatives and whole-school wellbeing activities.

8. Inclusion and Special Dietary Requirements

The school recognises that pupils may have food allergies, medical conditions, sensory needs, cultural or religious dietary requirements. These will be accommodated sensitively in consultation with parents/guardians.

Staff will encourage healthy choices in a positive, supportive manner, without embarrassing or singling out individual pupils.

9. Implementation and Review

The successful implementation of this policy is a shared responsibility between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents/guardians.

The policy will be communicated to parents and reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to support the health and wellbeing of all pupils.