



HEALTHY EATING POLICY

Introduction

Ratoath College seeks to foster personal development and learning where each individual is given the opportunity to realise their full potential in a community that is inclusive, respectful, caring and positive. To support this development and learning, a Healthy Eating Policy has been developed to encourage students to maintain a healthy lifestyle which will in turn benefit their capacity to learn.

The policy was first developed in 2008/09 and has been reviewed in 2015/16

Please note that on our website, under both the Parent and Student sections, a Healthy Lunches section has been added with recent publications in relation to healthy eating and also healthy lunch suggestions.

Rationale

For young people to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. As well, healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well-being. Adolescence is a time of physical growth and development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients. Eating a nourishing breakfast and a healthy school lunch allows children to take full advantage of the education provided for them.

Skipping breakfast and/or lunch can lessen students' concentration levels and make learning more difficult. Research has also shown that the foods eaten at lunchtime can affect concentration and behaviour in the classroom during the afternoon. *Obesity – The Policy Challenges: The Report of the National Task Force on Obesity (2005)* highlighted the worrying increase in childhood obesity across Europe. Foods associated with this increase in obesity include energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods such as packaged sweet and savoury snacks and sugar-sweetened soft drinks.

Aims

Ratoath College aims to promote healthy eating throughout the school community with a view to maintaining good health and to optimise the learning experience for all.

Objectives

- To develop an awareness of the importance of healthy eating
- To continue healthy eating patterns established in primary school for lifelong good health
- To increase energy and concentration levels and so enhance learning

Guidelines for a healthy lunch:

Try to eat a balanced lunch – have at least one serving from each of the four food groups

1. Carbohydrates
2. Dairy
3. Fruit and Vegetables
4. Meat/Fish/Eggs

See below for a selection of food you could choose from:



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| Carbohydrate Foods: Brown/white bread Pitta bread Tortilla (wraps) Brown/white pasta Brown/white rice Couscous Potato (baked, potato salad etc.) Homemade scones | Fruit & Vegetables: Salad Vegetables – tomato, lettuce, cucumber, peppers, radish, onion, sweetcorn, celery etc. Stir-fried vegetables (peppers, onions, mushrooms, baby-corn etc.) Roasted vegetable dishes Snacks: sugar snap peas, carrot sticks, celery sticks Fruit: apples, bananas, oranges, pears, grapes, berries, mango, pineapple (<i>can be eaten whole as a snack or chopped up with some yoghurt</i>) | Dairy: Low fat cheese Yoghurt – plain or fruit Milk | Meat, Fish, Eggs: Sliced meats in sandwiches or salads e.g. ham, turkey, chicken Fresh/tinned fish e.g. salmon, tuna Smoked salmon Egg mayonnaise or hard boiled eggs in a sandwich or salad |
| Suitable Drinks: Water, milk, unsweetened juice and soup are healthy drink choices | Other Suitable Snacks: Healthy alternative snacks which are encouraged include: Popcorn, cereal bars (excluding Rice Krispie Squares), crackers, dried fruit | | |

- Food and Drink which are NOT allowed in school:
- Foods high in sugar and/or fat are not suitable as a healthy lunch, such as crisps, sweets, biscuits, cakes and chocolate bars and may be confiscated if found. Rice Krispie Squares are also not allowed.
- All Soft/Fizzy drinks are not allowed including energy drinks like Red Bull

Other provisions of the policy

- Healthy Eating lessons are provided by SPHE/Wellbeing classes. Healthy eating is also encouraged on school noticeboards and at assembly at various times through the year. In keeping with Mol an Óige, stickers may be awarded by staff to students with healthy lunches.
- Staff should support and encourage healthy eating among students and act as positive role models.
- Exemptions: special occasions such as ‘Le Petit Déjeuner’ during French week, Pancake Tuesday, bake sale fundraising events etc.
- Any person with diabetes may need to have food containing glucose, e.g. chocolate in case of an emergency
- Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition/allergy which requires a special diet should contact the school
- Chewing gum is strictly prohibited on the ground of Ratoath College and at school events
- Students are requested not to consume nuts in school due to other students who may be allergic