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**Healthy Eating Policy**

A key element of our SPHE (*Social, Personal & Health Education*) Programme is encouraging pupils to be aware of healthy lifestyle choices, including the importance of a balanced, nutritious diet.

What people eat is known to be a key factor influencing health. Research indicates a strong link between diet & performance (*eg. A lower sugar intake promotes better concentration, lessens hyperactivity, protects teeth & lowers the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes & obesity. A lower salt intake reduces the risk of heart disease in later life*). It is the responsibility of parents & guardians to ensure that children have a healthy balanced, nutritional lunch at school daily.

Lunch is a very important meal for school-going children. It should provide approximately one third of their recommended daily nutritional intake, without being high in sugar, salt or fat.

The following guide is based on the food pyramid (overleaf) & contains some suggestions for quick, appetizing & nutritious lunches for pupils. The list is *not* exhaustive. There are many more alternative options not listed below (see [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu) for more ideas).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Bread & Alternatives** | **Fruit & Vegetables** |
| Bread or rolls –preferably wholemeal/wholegrainRice –preferably wholegrainPasta –preferably wholegrainBagels or Pitta pocketsBread sticks or crackersWholemeal sconesWrapsRice cakes | Fruit & BerriesSeedless grapes cutCarrot, celery or cucumber sticks (with a dip)Cherry tomatoes, sweetcornColeslawSalad leavesPotato saladSeeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame etc.) |
| **Savouries & Fillings** | **Drinks** |
| Lean meatChicken/turkeyTinned fish (sardines, salmon, tuna etc.)CheeseEggs (scrambled, poached, hard-boiled)BeansChickpeasVegetarian SausageTofu | Water (not flavoured)Milk (not flavoured) |

***One small treat*** is permitted on Fridays. Suggestions include a fun-size bar, fun-size packet of sweets, some chocolate, a small biscuit, a cereal bar etc. The pupils are encouraged to eat their treat ***after*** *their healthy lunch has been eaten.*

We have a number of children in the school who have heightened sensitivities or allergies (*in some cases, potentially fatal*) to certain foods. As a result, we request that certain foods ***not*** be included in your child’s lunchbox (*e.g. nuts & nut products*). Also, please remind your child ***not*** to share or swap lunches. Unfortunately we cannot accept home baked foods to share among classmates.

**We ask that the following items are NOT brought to school**

* Chewing gum
* Crisps (or crisp-style snacks)
* Fizzy drinks, sports/energy drinks, juices with a high sugar content, flavoured water
* Drinks in glass bottles
* Nut products (including Nutella)
* Sweets or lollipops
* Biscuits, bars, cereal bars (unless home-made & on Treat Day)
* Fruit winders
* Fast food (chips, wedges etc.)



**Note:**

As part of the *Green Schools Programme,* it is important that packaging of school lunches is kept to a minimum. All wrapping, waste and uneaten food will be returned home in the lunch box.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_