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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board



Healthy Eating Policy

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS - A Steiner Education

Introduction

When parents choose a Steiner education for their child, they are choosing a learning environment shaped by a holistic and human-centred philosophy. Within Steiner education, nourishment is understood to play a meaningful role in the healthy development of the child physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

At Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS ~ A Steiner Education, we place great value on the shared experience of preparing and enjoying food together. Children are encouraged to develop an appreciation for where their food comes from, to take time to sit together in community, and to cultivate warmth and connection through a shared meal. We believe that access to wholesome, nutritious food is an essential and consistent aspect of each child's school day, supporting them throughout their primary years.

Families are therefore encouraged to provide nourishing lunches each day. Meals are eaten together at the table, often with a candle lit to create a calm and reverent atmosphere, and with simple blessings offered before and after eating. In the infant classrooms. This activity allows them to engage with the process of making their own food and to gather afterwards to enjoy the meal they have created.

Our school provides daily hot meals through *Hot School Meals Company*, ensuring that all pupils have access to nutritious, balanced, and freshly prepared food. The meals offered follow national healthy-eating guidelines and are designed to promote the wellbeing and sustained energy of every child throughout the school day. We work closely with the provider to ensure menus include a variety of wholesome options, reduce processed foods, and accommodate dietary needs where possible.

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme, children are supported in developing an awareness of healthy eating and making thoughtful choices about the food they bring to school. Our Physical Education curriculum further nurtures children's physical development and wellbeing, while the Science curriculum deepens their understanding of how the human body grows and thrives.

Healthy Lunches at School

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. Ideally, it should provide roughly one-third of their recommended daily nutrients while remaining low in fat, sugar, and salt, and offering sufficient dietary fibre.

A healthy lunch box includes a balance of foods from the lower four layers of the Food Pyramid (see below). We encourage families to provide food that is fresh, wholesome, and, where possible, organic and locally sourced. This supports not only the child's health but also their connection with the wider natural and local community.

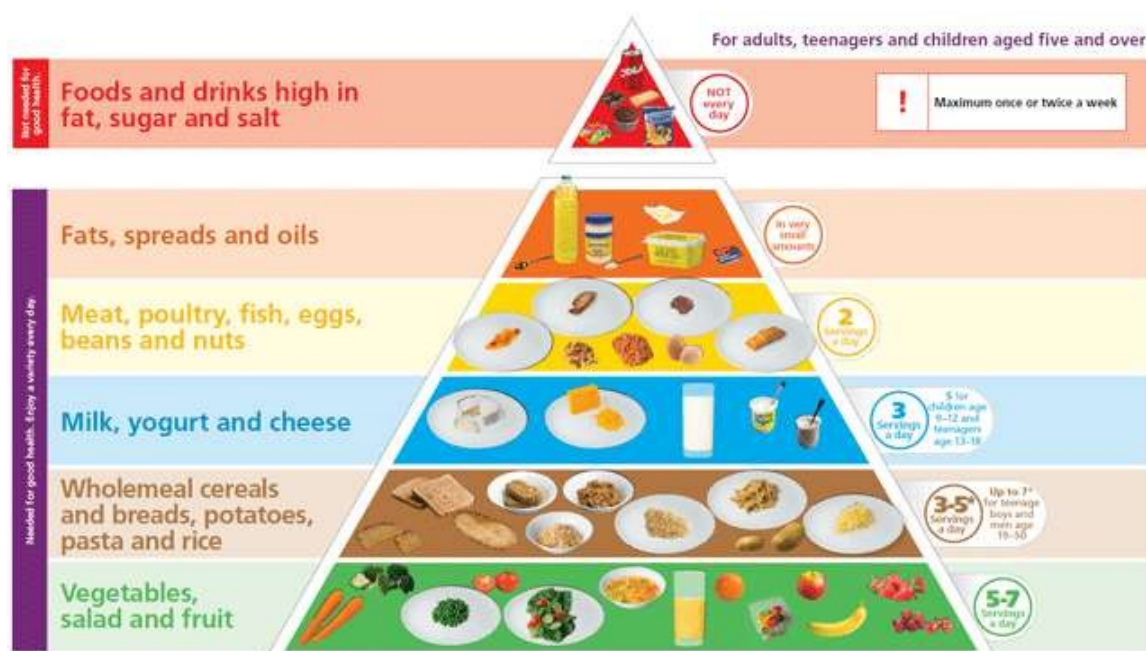
Foods to Avoid

To support a healthy eating culture, the following items should not be included in your child's lunch box:

crisps, chewing gum, sweets, cereal bars or chocolate-coated bars, cakes, biscuits, lollipops, chocolate, chocolate spread, winders, and crispy buns.

Healthy Snacks & the Food Pyramid

Healthy snacks are those naturally lower in processed sugar and saturated fats. The updated Food Pyramid places a strong emphasis on increasing daily fruit and vegetable intake, as well as healthy fats such as nuts & seeds, supporting children in developing vibrant, balanced eating habits.



Foods from the top tier of the Food Pyramid should not be included in your child's lunchbox.

If a child's snacks or lunches regularly include items that do not align with our Healthy Eating Policy, the class teacher may contact the parents or guardians to provide a gentle reminder of the guidelines. This communication is intended to support families in

promoting healthy habits and to ensure consistency in our whole-school approach to nutrition. Teachers will not draw attention to these items in front of the child, as this may cause embarrassment or anxiety, nor will children be permitted to comment on or monitor the contents of one another's lunchboxes. This helps maintain a positive, respectful environment where all children feel safe and included.

Healthy drink options include water or unsweetened natural juice. Children are encouraged to bring their drinks in reusable containers for both safety and environmental reasons. According to HSE guidance, there is no set daily requirement for how much fluid a child must drink; however, regular hydration is essential to support wellbeing and to prevent dehydration. Children naturally require more fluids during warm weather or after physical activity, and they should be reminded to drink throughout the day.

Special Dietary Needs

While our school encourages wholesome, nourishing food as part of a healthy daily rhythm, we understand that some children have medical, nutritional, or sensory needs that require an individualised approach to eating. When such needs arise, tailored adjustments to the Healthy Eating Policy will be made in consultation with parents or guardians, and any foods required to support a child's wellbeing will be accepted without comment or restriction. These may include items not typically included in our healthy eating guidelines, such as dark chocolate, energy bars, high-calorie snacks, or white bread etc.

Teachers will help to normalise differences by gently explaining to their classes without identifying any individual child that bodies have varied needs and that different foods support different people in different ways. In keeping with best-practice dietetic guidance, we avoid labelling foods as "good" or "bad," and instead cultivate a balanced, respectful, and joyful relationship with food. Our intention is that every child feels safe, valued, and able to eat what they need in order to thrive.

Children with Allergies

The school is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children with food allergies. Allergies are taken seriously and appropriate accommodations are made within our food practices to minimise risk. Parents and guardians are asked to inform the school of any diagnosed allergies so that clear and effective measures can be put in place. This information will be shared with the relevant class teachers and, where necessary, with other parents/guardians in the class to help maintain a safe environment for the child.

Ratification

This policy will be shared with all staff and the wider school community as appropriate and will be reviewed regularly.

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS on Thursday 18th December 2025.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management



Principal

