

Healthy Eating Policy

December 2025

Boston N.S.

INTRODUCTION

This policy was developed by the staff of Boston National School and the Board of Management in the school year 2025-2026. The HSE Healthy Eating Policy Toolkit was consulted when preparing this policy. Good nutrition is essential for school children.

This policy is intended as a guide to healthy and safe eating for the school. The focus of this policy is to support parents in encouraging their children to develop healthy eating habits at an early age. A knowledge of what constitutes a nutritionally balanced diet is acknowledged as being of importance for students. In support of this rationale nutrition education is considered to be an important element of the curriculum in Boston N.S. SPHE: Primary School Curriculum. Physical activity is integral to any healthy eating programme and hence should be promoted and encouraged.

RATIONALE

- Healthy eating is an essential component of the overall health of children and as such is part of the holistic education that Boston N.S. advocates in its education philosophy and mission statement. This adoption of a whole school approach ensures healthy eating messages are part of every aspect of school life.
- Healthy eating is part of the SPHE (social, personal and health education) food and nutrition curriculum programme for each primary school class. Research suggests that the provision of nutritious school food enhances not only the child's health but also allows the child to take full advantage of the education provided by improving attention levels and concentration spans.
- Key healthy eating messages that are consistent and fact-based assist children in decision making and forming of attitudes and beliefs around healthy eating.

RELATIONSHIP TO CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

As part of our overall school policy the Healthy Eating Policy helps to promote the health of each child and to provide a foundation for healthy living. Our school aims to provide a holistic education for our children and health of mind and body is an ideal we aim for in all our pupils.

AIMS:

The aims of our policy are:

- To positively enable healthy eating among school-age children
- To support and encourage healthy eating habits in children which it is hoped will become lifelong eating habits
- To raise levels of concentration and energy within class through the consumption of healthy food

GUIDELINES:

A healthy lunchbox & healthy snack for small break

- A healthy lunchbox includes food from each of the first four shelves of the food pyramid
- A healthy choice of **drink** includes water and milk at all times. Hot drinks such as soup or tea contained in a flask. No fizzy drinks or fruit squash allowed.
- The following **foods are not allowed at any time:** chewing gum, lollipops, fizzy or energy drinks, peanuts, pizza, chips, burgers or breaded/battered chicken nuggets.
- Parents should inform the school if a child is on a special diet or has an allergy i.e. nut.
- 'Treats' allowed on Fridays only. i.e. one treat in the lunch box. (Nutella or chocolate spread on bread or crackers or 1 fun size bar or 1 of any of the fruit corner type yogurts or popcorn)
- Children eat their lunch while supervised in classrooms
- Children are encouraged to drink water/fluids at specified times during the school day.
- Treats on birthdays are allowed if parents would like to.

Healthy Lunches

Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide children with a healthy lunch, which helps to maintain their level of concentration in the classroom throughout the day. A healthy lunch should, if possible, include a variety of foods from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.

These are:

- Bread/cereals/wraps/rolls/pitta pockets
- Fruit/vegetables for example: raw carrot sticks or cucumber)
- Milk, cheese and yoghurt
- Meat/chicken/fish and alternatives

Here are simple guidelines to help you and your child make that simple choice:

Drinks: water or milk- should be in reusable or recyclable (no glass bottles please) which can be refilled every day. Fizzy drinks are not allowed.

Yoghurt in tubs: Please send a small yogurt, yogurts are not allowed that have chocolate, chocolate balls etc.

Sandwiches/crackers/wraps/rolls/baps/bagels with a healthy filling.

All types of fruit (oranges should be peeled and ready to eat for younger children & apples sliced)

Fruit Break

A working fruit break will take place about 10am in the classrooms. This helps with the pupil's concentration levels and break the fast for children who may have had an early breakfast or

not had anything. Fruit for this break should be easily accessible, pre-peeled or sliced where necessary.

Treats

On Fridays parents/guardians may give a treat to their own child and teachers may give treats to their own class. These may be special occasions such as; End-of-term/year parties, Halloween, Some specific occasions or events.

HOT SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAMME

Under this programme funded by the Department of Social Welfare, students in our school receive individual hot lunches from HotschoolMeals.ie Bradbury & Connolly. These lunches meet with the department criteria for nutritional value and align with our healthy eating policy. Students who wish to supplement their lunch may bring extra food from home. Snack for small break must be provided from home. If a student does not wish to avail of the Hot lunches, parents should inform the school in writing.

POLICY SUCCESS CRITERIA

We will know that the policy is effective if the awareness of the school community is heightened and if all children bring healthy lunches to school.

We will know the policy is effective by:

- Observing what children have for lunch and noticing an improvement in consumption of fruit, vegetables and other healthy foods.
- Listening to feedback from parent/guardians and teachers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents play an essential role in helping shape children's eating habits and attitudes towards physical activity. Parents are encouraged to send children to school with a healthy lunch. Teachers will monitor lunches in their own classroom. The teacher will send home any food not allowed as per guidelines, along with any uneaten food. (Children are asked to bring packaging home).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW

The policy will be reviewed in consultation with the principal, staff, parents and pupils.

IMPLEMENTATION

If children bring prohibited food or drink into school they will be asked to put it away until after school as they are not permitted to eat unhealthy food in school.

If children persist in bringing unhealthy food to school the class teacher and principal will organise a meeting with their parents/guardians to remind them of the Healthy Eating Policy. It is very difficult to implement the policy successfully if all children do not adhere to the guidelines. It is also not fair on the children who comply with our Healthy Eating Policy to see children who clearly do not obey the rules.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

Parents/guardians have a responsibility to provide lunches which do not include any of the prohibited foods and, if possible, to include variety.

Children have a responsibility to eat their own lunch, and not share or trade food or drink with other.

Teachers have a responsibility to provide a good example through their own healthy habits.

Any uneaten food will be sent home each day with the child so that parents can monitor how much their child is eating.

The whole school community will work together to promote the progress of this policy.

All are encouraged to discuss and provide feedback on its performance which will be reported back as appropriate to the Principal and staff.

The overall performance of the policy will be regularly monitored and evaluated by the BoM.

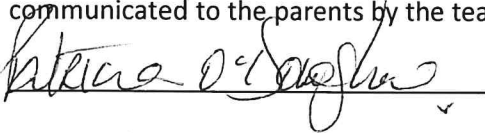
Useful Information:

The Health Promotion unit has a booklet called 'Healthy Lunchboxes'. It is available to download from www.healthpromotion.ie.

The Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute has a vast amount of information on nutrition and diet and have suggestions on what to include in school lunch-boxes. www.indi.ie

Ratification and Communication:

The BoM ratified this policy on 11/12/25 after it has been drafted, circulated and amended by teachers, parents and children. The policy will be communicated to all staff, parents and children. It will be promoted in school as part of the SPHE programme and its importance will be communicated to the parents by the teachers and Principal.



Patricia O'Donoghue

Chairperson of the Board



Áine Ní Dhochartaigh

Principal