



# CLAREMORRIS BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL

Kilcolman Road, Claremorris, Co. Mayo. F12 Y996. Roll no 19915H

Charity Number 20130701



## Healthy Eating and Drinks Policy

### Introductory Statement

Claremorris Boys National School aims to help all those involved in the school community to develop positive and responsible attitudes towards eating, and to appreciate the contribution that nutritious foods make to one's health. As part of the Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) Programme we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes increasing the availability of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. A healthier school environment better prepares children to learn and to value their own long term health. Additionally, this policy was further reviewed by our school dentist for feedback and input.

### Rationale

The existing policy was due for review. In consultation with our school dentist it was noted that the *“DMFT rate (decayed, missing, filled) is only increasing amongst our school age children and if we don't adopt stricter policies this is sadly only going to get worse”*. The food we eat has a major effect on our general health and well-being and especially so in the case of children. Healthy eating enhances health and allows children to take advantage of the education provided and to engage fully in daily activities. Research indicates a strong link between health and learning:

- Low sugar intake promotes concentration, lessens hyperactivity or stomach up-set, protects teeth and lessens the risk of diabetes.
- Healthy, active children are better prepared to learn and more likely to attend school.
- A nutrient-poor diet during childhood can have damaging effects on the brain and impair academic performance.

In order to promote healthy eating habits in our school, we will continue to implement this healthy eating policy.

### Aims

This policy development aims to:

- To improve the nutrition standard and eating habits of all parties in the school.



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- To promote the personal development and well-being of each child.
- To provide a foundation for healthy living by encouraging healthy eating patterns and thereby educating children for later life.
- To clarify the schools position on foods encouraged /discouraged.
- To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy balanced diet.
- To encourage the child to eat a variety of healthy foods.
- To ensure that parents and teachers are giving consistent messages about healthy eating.
- To act as a guideline for any new staff or families joining the school.

Lunch is a very important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in saturated fats, sugar or salt.

The children eat twice a day at school, before going out to play at small break and before/after play time at big break. To ensure good concentration, it is important for children to drink lots of water or milk. Growing children need calcium each day, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. As some children are allergic to calcium rich dairy products such as milk, or have a low tolerance for dairy, there are plenty of other foods which are high in calcium, easy to digest and delicious, such as: dairy free milk, sesame seeds, cauliflower and broccoli.

## Guidelines

Establishing good eating habits in childhood is extremely important, as this will establish lifelong healthy patterns, reduce childhood obesity and enhance academic performance. As parents and educators we must promote a healthy message about food. Healthy eating habits begin at home but we can support and encourage good eating habits at school too.

Unfortunately, convenience and processed foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and sugary drinks are becoming more prevalent in school lunches and quickly replacing the fruits and vegetables. We ask you to provide a healthy lunch from the time your child first starts school that will include a variety of wholesome foods and limit the pre-packaged, processed foods.

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising and nutritious lunches for your children. (See also the food pyramid in Appendix A).



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## Foods Encouraged At School

### Whole Grains

Whole grains provide high-quality and sustained energy. They are an excellent source of carbohydrates and contain essential enzymes, dietary fibre, Iron and Vitamin E.

Lunch ideas include: wholemeal scones, pitta breads with hummus, pasta salad, oatcakes, rice cakes and vegetable fried rice, wholegrain bread, brown rice, wholewheat pasta, quinoa, oats, couscous.

### Fruit and Vegetables

Plant-based foods or fruits and vegetables provide necessary vitamins and minerals such as vitamins A and C, that allow for healthy hair and skin, boost immunity and help protect against diseases.

Lunch ideas include: Sliced carrots, cucumbers, peppers, squash, broccoli, fruit salad (melon, apples, banana, peach, oranges, pineapple, kiwi, grapes, plums, berries) lettuce salad leaves,

### Protein

Protein contains essential amino acids that are important for our body to function properly and help in growth and repair.

Lunch ideas include: ham, lean meat/fish, salmon cakes, tuna salad, mini quiche, salad, turkey burger, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, split peas.

### Dairy (Calcium)

This food group provides nutrients including calcium, potassium, phosphorus and vitamins A, D and B12 that aid in growing strong bones and teeth and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Lunch ideas include: cheddar cheese cubes (non-processed cheese), low sugar yogurt, cream cheese and milk. For more recipes and lunch ideas see Appendix C for resource links.



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## Drinks

Keeping hydrated with the right amount of fluid is important to stay energised, prevent headaches and maintain overall health. The school dentist strongly endorses the implementation of a 'Water and Milk only' Policy.

### Guidelines

- Parents are advised when enrolling their child in this school that only healthy foods and water or milk are permitted for school lunches.
- Each year *The Healthy Food Pyramid* will be referred to regularly in class by the teachers: see Appendix A.

Fizzy drinks and fruit juices not allowed: milk and water only. The 4Cs are not allowed: Chewing gum, Crisps, Chocolate Bars and Candy. In order to promote Healthy teeth children drink only water or milk with their lunch. Please mark your child's name on the outside of his/her lunch box.

Food hygiene and safety is of great importance and we endeavour to encourage the children to wash their hands before/after eating and after using the toilet.

### Foods To Discourage

#### Foods Discouraged in School

Foods that contain artificial additives, colouring, high saturated and trans fats, high sodium content or high sugar content are not recommended for school lunches. As a general rule try to avoid processed foods and be sure to read the nutritional labels and ingredient list. The traffic light labelling on food packages help to identify foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt, see Appendix B for the label guide.

#### Here are some specific foods we discourage:

- Fizzy drinks, artificial juices and high sugar sports drinks.
- Processed snacks such as crisps, energy bars and sweets.
- Sugary treats such as cakes, buns, biscuits, bars, chewing gum, lollipops.



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## Allergies

At times it is necessary to cater to some children that may have a severe allergic reaction to peanuts/nuts. This allergic reaction can occur through ingestion of nut products, cross contamination and breathing peanuts/ nuts in the air. Due to the severity of the problem, it is important that all parents carry out the following measures to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction to a child:

- Avoid giving your child anything in their lunch that contains nuts – this includes all cereal bars and sandwich spreads etc., which states it contains nuts or may contain nut traces.
- Speak to your child about **not** sharing their lunches. The class teachers will also speak to their pupils about this.

## Waste Disposal

Claremorris Boys NS is a Green School, and we create as little waste as possible. Children are requested to take home all used lunch wrappers, cartons, crusts etc. in their lunch box. This can be a useful indicator for you to know how much your child has eaten at snack times. We encourage children to re-use whatever lunch packaging they can, e.g. plastic bottles.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Parents

- To provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children -Appendix A, B and C.
- To encourage healthy eating and drinking.
- To inform the school of any child's special dietary needs or of a child's allergies.
- To support school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars/ foods containing chocolate, fizzy drinks or sweets to school.

### Children

- To eat their lunch.
- To bring home any uneaten lunch.
- To bring fruit and vegetables for lunch as much as possible.
- To help make their lunches and remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy, remind parents that they should only drink water or milk at school.
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks to school.



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## Principal & Teachers

- To help children understand the benefits of healthy eating and drinking.
- To promote and encourage healthy eating and drinking.
- If children bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks to school they will not be allowed to have them while in school.
- To remind staff to encourage children to include fruit and vegetables in their lunches.
- To check that lunches are being eaten and that children's lunches are sufficient and healthy to support their healthy growth and development.

## Board of Management

- To support the implementation of this Healthy Eating policy and encourage uptake of any Healthy Eating initiatives.

## Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be evident from:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils in relation to the development of healthy eating habits.
- The observation and content of the children eating healthy lunches daily.
- The increased awareness about nutrition.
- Their understanding of different foods and how they impact their health.
- Observation of children eating healthy lunches daily.
- Improved report from school dentist – decrease in incidence of tooth decay.

## Review

This policy is an integral part of the culture of Claremorris Boys N.S. and will be reviewed every three years, with the next review due in 2026, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier. The health and well-being of our pupils is central to our mission as educators.

## Ratification & Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Claremorris Boys NS on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 and subsequently communicated to the school community via the school's website. This policy will be reviewed regularly and ratified by the BoM following



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consultation with all the partners. The policy is available to view on  
[www.claremorrisbns.com](http://www.claremorrisbns.com)

Signed: Colman Warde

Date: 06-11-2023

**Colman Warde, Chairperson,  
Board Of Management.**

Signed: Ciarán Murray

Date: 06-11-2023

**Ciarán Murray, Secretary/Principal  
Board Of Management.**



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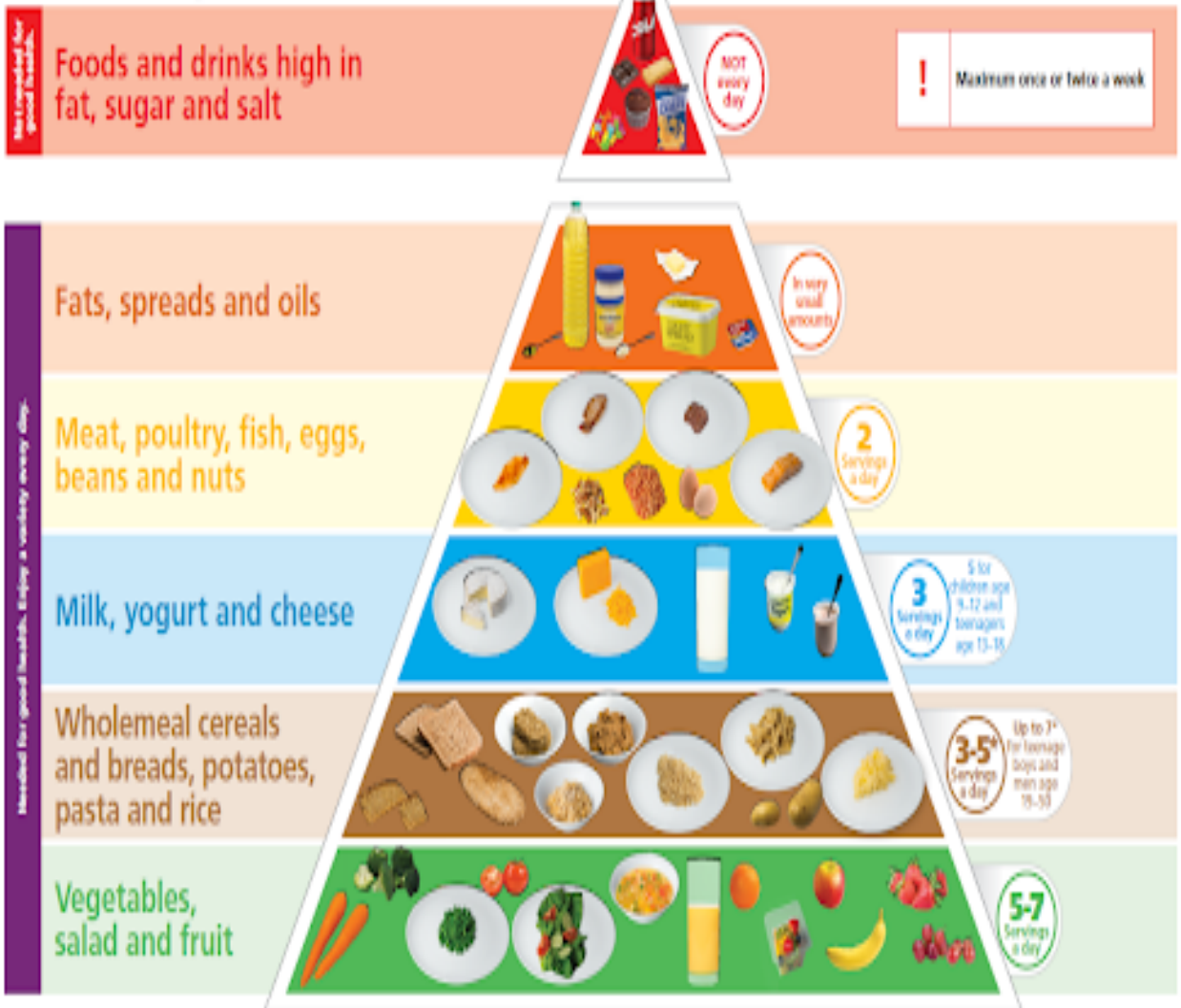


## Appendix A: The Food Pyramid

**Healthy Food for Life** [www.healthyireland.ie](http://www.healthyireland.ie)

### The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over



\*Daily Servings Guide - wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5-12)	Teenager (13-19)	Adult (20-64)	Adult (65+)	Inactive	Teenager (13-19)	Adult (20-64)	Adult (65+)
		3-4	4	4-5		3-4		3
	3-5	5-7	5-7	4-5		4-5	4-6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day - water is best

**Get Active**  
To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week for 150 minutes a week; children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day

Source: Department of Health, December 2015.





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## Appendix B: Traffic Light Food Labelling

**PUT A TRAFFIC LIGHT ON EVERY FOOD**

	<b>LOW</b> A healthier choice	<b>MED</b> OK most of the time	<b>HIGH</b> Just occasionally
<b>Sugars</b>	5g or less	5.1g – 22.5g	More than 22.5g
<b>Fat</b>	3g or less	3.1g – 17.5g	More than 17.5g
<b>Saturates</b>	1.5g or less	1.6g – 5g	More than 5g
<b>Salt</b>	0.3g or less	0.31g – 1.5g	More than 1.5g

- To convert the sodium value to salt, multiply by 2.5
- High Fibre = 6g or more fibre per 100g

## Appendix C: Healthy Food and Educational Resources

- Healthy Ireland: <http://www.healthyireland.ie/>  
*Guidelines and resources for leading a healthy life in Ireland.*
- Health Promotion: <https://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/schools>  
*Framework and steps to promote a healthy environment in Irish schools.*
- Annabel Karmel: <https://www.annabelkarmel.com/>  
*UK children's chef and cookery author hosting great recipes and lunch ideas that allow you to filter by preferences/diet restrictions, age, meal and ingredients.*
- Super Healthy Kids: <http://www.superhealthykids.com/>  
*Easy and healthy recipes for the whole family along with blogs on all things food.*
- Healthy lunch Box to Learn Grow and Play: [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)  
*Daily breakdown of school lunch ideas for children.*
- Safe Food Healthy Lunch boxes: [www.safefood.net](http://www.safefood.net)  
*Free download on healthy lunch decisions for children.*