

Healthy Eating and Nut-Free Policy

1. Policy Rationale

As part of our commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of all our pupils, Scoil Aoife CNS promotes healthy eating habits in line with the Department of Education's *Healthy Ireland* framework and the *DEIS Programme*.

Our goal is to encourage children to develop lifelong healthy eating habits and to ensure a safe environment for all pupils, including those with food allergies.

2. Provision of School Meals

Scoil Aoife CNS participates in the *Hot School Meals Programme* under DEIS.

- All pupils are provided with a free hot lunch and snack each school day.
- The meals provided meet nutritional guidelines set out by the Department of Social Protection.
- Menus are varied, balanced, and cater to a range of dietary needs.

3. Bringing Lunches from Home

While all pupils are offered a free school lunch, parents/guardians who choose to send in a lunch from home must ensure it follows our Healthy Eating Guidelines.

Healthy lunchbox ideas include:

- Sandwiches, wraps, or pasta
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Yogurt (low sugar) or cheese
- Popcorn

- **Water only** to drink

Foods and drinks not permitted:

- Crisps, chocolate, sweets, or cereal bars high in sugar
- Fizzy drinks, fruit drinks, or flavoured waters
- Biscuits, cakes, or pastries

The aim is to reduce high-fat, high-sugar, and highly processed foods in favour of fresh, wholesome alternatives.

4. Water Policy

- Water is the only drink permitted in school.
 - Each child is provided with a school water bottle, which should be washed at home at least once a week and returned to school each morning.
 - Every classroom has a filtered water tap where bottles can be refilled throughout the day.
 - This encourages good hydration habits and supports the school's healthy lifestyle approach.
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5. Nut-Free Policy

Scoil Aoife CNS is a strictly nut-free school to protect pupils with severe nut allergies.

- No nuts or nut products (including peanut butter, Nutella, cereal bars, or any foods containing traces of nuts) are allowed in lunches or snacks.
- Parents and guardians are asked to carefully check ingredient labels before sending in food.
- Staff will reinforce this rule and may contact parents if food containing nuts is brought to school.

This policy applies to all areas of the school, including classrooms, the yard, and school events.

6. Children with Additional Needs or Medical Requirements

We recognise that some children may have specific dietary requirements or additional needs that may not align fully with this policy.

- Exceptions to the Healthy Eating Policy may be made for children with medical conditions, sensory needs, or specific dietary restrictions.

- Such exceptions will be agreed upon in consultation with parents/guardians, school staff, and (where relevant) health professionals.

7. Education and Promotion of Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is supported through:

- SPHE, Science, and Physical Education lessons
- Initiatives such as *Active Week*, and *Wellbeing Week*
- Classroom discussions about nutrition and wellbeing
- Positive reinforcement and modelling by staff

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Parents/Guardians:** Support the policy by providing healthy lunches and following the nut-free and water-only guidelines.
- **Pupils:** Are encouraged to make healthy food choices and understand the importance of good nutrition and hydration.
- **School Staff:** Promote healthy eating through classroom practice and role modelling.
- **Catering Provider:** Ensure all meals meet nutritional standards and remain nut-free.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed when required.

Feedback from parents, staff, and pupils will be sought as part of the review process.

Adopted by the Board of Management: _____

Principal: _____

Chairperson of BOM: _____

Date: _____

Review Date: _____