

Rathbarry National School

Healthy Eating Policy

Introductory Statement

Rathbarry National School is a health promoting school.

A Health Promoting Committee is in place comprising of:

Representatives from the Board of Management – Marguerite Jennings, parents – Deana O'Mara, teachers- Colette Barrett, 5th class pupil – Rachel Hodnett and 6th class pupil – Lauren Kingston.

A nutrition project team was put in place to develop a Healthy Eating Policy for Rathbarry National School. Mrs Ann Twohig- Kearns, Nicholas O' Hea and Shannon Kingston (6th class pupils) joined the health promoting committee.

We encourage all the pupils to bring a healthy lunch daily as a follow up to the Food Dudes programme which we participated in. The pupils along with their parent(s) / guardian(s) were requested to complete a survey to seek their views and suggestions regarding healthy eating in school.

Following the completed survey the Parents' Association and Board of Management were consulted on the results and from the positive feedback it was decided to follow H.S.E. guidelines and introduce a healthy eating policy to Rathbarry National School. The School Nutrition Project team undertook a workshop with dietician Mary Murnane to develop a Healthy Eating policy.

Rationale

The purpose of this healthy eating policy is

- To follow the food and nutrition guidelines issued by the Department of Health and Children.
- To ensure pupils and parent(s) / guardian(s) become aware of the importance of food for growth and development as part of the S.P.H.E. curriculum.
 - ❖ Strand Unit: Taking Care of My Body: Food and Nutrition (Curriculum J. Infants – 6th Class)
 - ❖ Making choices (See Teacher Guidelines pp 11-13)
- As part of the Health Promoting school initiative.
- H.S.E. information is available to parents with regards to Healthy School Lunches explaining the food pyramid and the benefits of eating a healthy diet. The food pyramid outlines an excellent common sense approach to healthy and balanced eating.
- A healthy lunch is defined as something taken from each of the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid which is in line with the Dept. of Health directive on Healthy Eating.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Rathbarry National School is committed to promoting the well being of all of the pupils in our care, developing the spiritual, emotional and physical potential of each individual. The school strives towards developing the full potential of every pupil in communication, literacy, numeracy and relevant life skills.

There is an important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively which results in improvements in concentration and behaviour. This in turn assists pupils in achieving their full potential. It is important that pupils have a good breakfast as this aids concentration and helps pupils to remain alert during class.

Aims

The aim of this healthy eating policy is to ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition in Rathbarry National School promotes the health and well being of pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

Rathbarry National School can also play a role in the wider community to promote family health.

Through the promotion of healthy eating Rathbarry National School aims to:

- ❖ Improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues.
- ❖ Present consistent informed messages about healthy eating within school and encourage pupils to make wise choices about food and nutrition.
- ❖ To raise levels of pupils' concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food.
- ❖ To encourage pupils to eat a healthy lunch
- ❖ To encourage pupils to be aware, alert and responsive to litter problems caused by junk food, pre- prepared food, juice cartons etc. and to recycle all food and drinks products.

Rathbarry National School will work towards these aims with the school health promoting committee, parent(s) / guardian(s), teachers and health professionals.

Guidelines (Content of Policy)

At present we encourage all members of the school community to bring a healthy lunch daily as a follow up to the Food Dudes programme which we participated in. We encourage bringing in a portion of fruit and vegetables daily for all pupils.

A healthy lunch is defined as something taken from each the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid, which is in line with the Dept. of Health directive on Healthy Eating.

Drinks, which are encouraged, include milk, water fruit juices and yogurt drinks. (We participate in the school milk scheme and encourage all pupils to avail of this healthy drink.)

We encourage all parent(s) / guardian(s) to support the policy in the interest of their own child's health and well being.

The teachers in Rathbarry National School will implement the policy.

Teachers are encouraged to talk to the pupils at the beginning of each term on food and nutrition and the benefits of healthy eating.

If a pupil brings a "discouraged" food or drink to school the teacher will encourage the pupil not to do so again. If the bringing in of a "discouraged" food persists parent(s) / guardian(s) will then be notified. Pupils who bring healthy lunches will be praised and encouraged. Food from the top shelf of the food pyramid will be allowed at end of term parties/special occasions determined by the school.

A copy of the Healthy Eating Policy will be included as part of the enrolment pack for new pupils enrolling at Rathbarry National School and will be on view in school.

The Parents' Association of Rathbarry National School will also promote this policy.

Success Criteria

We will know that the Healthy Eating Policy is effective if all the children bring healthy lunches to school.

Roles and Responsibility

The Healthy Eating Policy will be supported and developed by the Health Promotion Committee and the School Nutrition Committee. The Health Promotion Committee will co-ordinate the progress of the policy, encourage and accept feedback from parent(s) / guardian(s) and pupils on its implementation.

Timeframe for Implementation

The Healthy Eating Policy will be fully implemented by September 2009

Timeframe for Review

The Healthy Eating Policy will initially be reviewed annually and thereafter as the need arises.

Responsibility for Review

The School Nutrition Committee will be responsible for the review.

Ratification and Communication

This Healthy Eating Policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Rathbarry National School at a meeting held on _____ and will be implemented as and from September 2009.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson Board of Management
Rathbarry National School.

The ratified policy will be available on request at the school.