



## **Caherline N.S Healthy Eating Policy**

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, at Caherline National School we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy lunches. We know that our diet is a key factor influencing our health. Research also indicates a strong link between diet and performance of pupils in the classroom.

To promote healthy eating habits in our school we have introduced this healthy eating policy.

### **Aims**

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of the child
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects.

### **Objectives**

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growing and developing and staying healthy
2. To enable the child to accept some personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Lunch is an important meal for school-going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. It should also provide dietary fiber.

The traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start.

## **Milk**

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese or yoghurt. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage them to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead. Fluids are important for children - up to 6 cups of fluid should be encouraged daily. Milk and water are the best options.

**Pupils are not allowed to bring the following to school Monday to Thursday:**

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Fruit winders

Friday is our treat day. On this day, children can bring one food item from the above list to school.

**Lollipops, chewing gum and fizzy drinks are completely banned in school.**

## **Fruit/ Veg. Breaks**

All classes will have a fruit and veg. break during the day, other than at designated lunch times. They will be allowed to take a drink as necessary.

## **Five steps to food safety**

Make sure your child's lunchbox is clean and safe. Remember that sandwiches containing meat or other foods that require refrigeration should be kept as cold as possible until lunch. Help keep lunches cool and safe by following these tips:

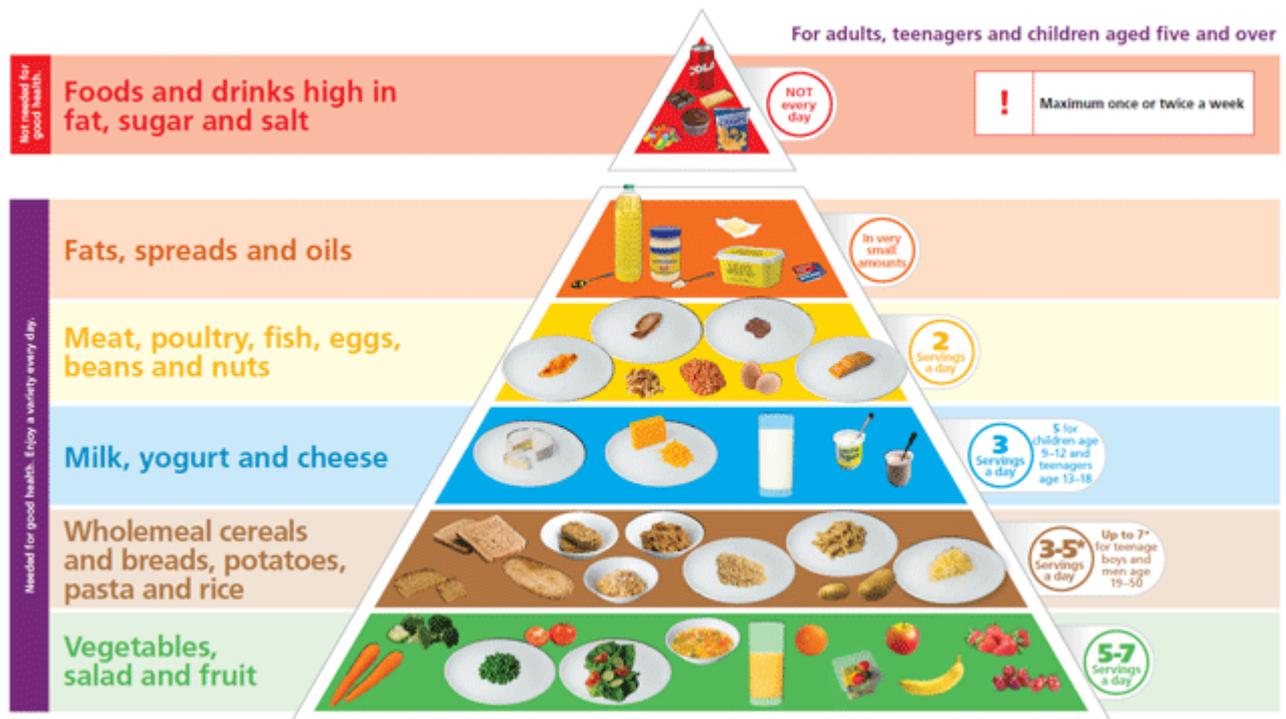
1. An insulated box or bag can be used to help keep lunches cool. A small ice pack can also be used or alternatively include a frozen fruit juice carton
2. It is important that lunches are not kept in a warm place such as near radiators or in direct sunlight
3. Discard any perishable food that hasn't been eaten at the end of the day
4. Wash and dry reusable water bottles, lids and lunchboxes every day in warm soapy water.
5. And last, always remember to wash your hands before eating lunch.

## **Green Flag School**

Children are also asked to:

- take home (in lunchbox) all uneaten food, silver paper, wrappings, containers and cartons
- put only fruit peel into the compost bins
- not bring in cans and glass – for safety reasons.
- Use reusable drinking bottles

**N.B. Parents/guardians of any child with a medical condition which requires a special diet must contact the school.**



## The Food Pyramid

The Food Pyramid is designed to make healthy eating easier. Healthy eating is about getting the correct amount of nutrients – protein, fat, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals you need to maintain good health.

Foods that contain the same type of nutrients are grouped together on each of the shelves of the Food Pyramid. This gives you a choice of different foods from which to choose a healthy diet. Following the Food Pyramid as a guide will help you get the right balance of nutritious foods within your calorie range. Studies show that we take in too many calories from foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt, on the top shelf of the Food Pyramid. They provide very little of the essential vitamins and minerals your body needs. Limiting these is essential for healthy eating.

So in a nutshell, healthy eating involves:

- plenty of **vegetables, salad and fruit**
- a serving of **wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice** at every meal - go for wholegrain varieties wherever possible
- some **milk, yoghurt and cheese**
- some **meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts**
- a very small amount of **fats, spreads and oils**
- and a very small amount or no **foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt**