

Aim of the Whole School Food Policy

To ensure that all aspects of food and nutrition promote health and well-being of pupils, staff and all visitors to our school. This policy takes into account local and national guidance including the School food: Top Marks programme which is a joint venture between the Department of Education (DE), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland).

Objectives of the Whole School Food Policy

1. To ensure consistent messages about food across the curriculum and throughout the school environment.
2. To enable pupils to make informed choices about food.
3. To have a positive impact towards the physical development of all members of our school community.

Action to meet our objectives

1. We will consult pupils, parents and staff in guiding food policy and practice in school.
2. We will seek advice and support from external agencies to develop our policy.
3. We will review our dining environment to encourage positive social interaction during mealtimes of pupils and staff within our school.
4. We will encourage staff to be positive role models to eat healthily where they can be observed by pupils.
5. We will ensure that healthier food and drink options are available and promoted.
6. We will work with food providers to ensure that meals, vending machines and other foods meet the government's food based standards for school lunches and all food other than lunches.
7. We will ensure that pupils' menus and food choices are monitored periodically.
8. We will ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn about food and nutrition as part of the school curriculum.
9. We will ensure that pupils and staff have access to clean, fresh drinking water.

Breakfast

Our school promotes the value of breakfast and encourages every pupil to have breakfast at the start of the day to ensure they are alert and ready to learn.

Before and After School Clubs

Before and after school clubs play an important role in developing good habits. Pupils are encouraged to partake of fluids during and after sports and where refreshments are on offer, healthy choices are encouraged.

Break times

Our school encourages healthy, nutritious, sugar free food at break-times. Vending machines provide drinks which fit the criteria laid down in government standards. The canteen break-time club is run in accordance with the government standards. Pupils are discouraged from bringing in "energy drinks" or similar sugary beverages.

School Meals

Our school meals meet the latest nutritional standards for school lunches and the requirements for food in school other than lunches. Our school will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the quality of the meals and the consumption and waste issues. Regular questionnaires and surveys monitor canteen usage and suggestions for requested dishes are welcomed via the School Council suggestion box which is located outside the Junior Canteen

Packed Lunches

Our school encourages parents to provide nutritious packed lunches based on the Balance of Good Health by providing foods which are low in fat, sugar and salt. Parents are reminded that a packed lunch needs to be wrapped and kept cold, as lack of refrigeration until lunchtime could lead to growth of harmful bacteria. Parents are encouraged to use an insulated box or bag.

Water

Access to water is a fundamental right and necessary for good health. Children should drink water during the school day and are permitted to have water bottles in class. Access to drinking water-taps is available at Coolnafranky House and the Astro-turf and in teaching departments on request.

School Trips

Food or drink provided on school trips conforms to the latest HPA guidance and is consistent with the whole school food policy.

Rewards

Our school recognises the importance of acknowledging the achievement of pupils. Our school does not reward pupils with sweets or food treats. Rewards include mobile phone top-ups, retail and leisure vouchers or items of stationery.

Vending Machines

Our school ensures that vending machines offer a range of drinks that comply with the school food standards (water, still or sparkling; fruit drinks with at least 50% unsweetened fruit juice; yogurt or milk drinks with less than 5% added sugar).

Dining Room Environment

Our school will adopt strategies to improve the current dining room environment and aim to provide adequate space for all pupils to sit down to eat lunch. We will consult with pupils to develop an environment which encourages social interaction.

Food in the Curriculum

Our school promotes healthy eating by working with pupils to learn about food in the context of a healthy diet and healthy lifestyle making pupils aware of the variety of foods including foods from other cultures. Pupils will develop skills in planning, budgeting and preparing a diet to achieve a balance of good health as well as basic food hygiene and safety practices. This is accomplished through subjects such as Home Economics, Science, Personal Development and Physical Education.

Teachers who teach food as part of the curriculum will be given the opportunity to attend training as appropriate and have access to the resources to keep their skills and knowledge up to date.

Food Safety

All food preparation activities taking place in either a pre-school setting, after school clubs or school meals setting will be carried out by food handlers trained in food hygiene or supervised by a person trained in food hygiene.

Food for Staff

The staff in our school are clear about the aims and objectives of our food policy. All staff have a duty to be good role models to pupils. All staff are encouraged to adopt the whole school food policy during the school day.

Fund Raising Events

Fund raising is an important part of school life. All fund raising activities will consider the importance of the whole school food policy. Where possible, the school will promote healthier choices, however, in some circumstances eg. occasional charity bun sales the HPA standards will not be applied – although on such occasions healthy alternatives will also be offered.

Complaints Procedure

Our school welcomes the views of the whole school community and we will deal with complaints quickly and efficiently by following our complaint procedure (as detailed in the homework diary). We will comply with the mandatory food standards and refer any complaints to the Minister for Education should we not be able to resolve a complaint about them.