**Healthy Eating Policy**

**Introduction:** As part of Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) in Ballyleague N.S. we encourage our children to become aware of the need for healthy eating and healthy food in our lunch boxes. Research indicates strong links between diet, concentration and performance as follows:

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| **Low sugar intake during the school day:** |
| * improves concentration
* reduces hyperactivity
* protects teeth
* reduces risk of diabetes
* reduces risk of heart disease in later life
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**Importance of parents in the development of Ballyleague N.S. Whole School Healthy Eating Policy:**

We in Ballyleague N.S. are aware that the primary role model in children’s healthy eating education lies with parents. Successful implementation of this healthy eating policy relies on building positive, supportive relationships with the parents of the children in our school. In promoting this objective we will

* inform parents about the school’s healthy eating policy and practice.
* encourage parents to assist in its implementation, and participate in the review of the policy.

**Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:**

Ballyleague N.S. seeks to help the children to grow and develop emotionally, socially, intellectually and to develop in to confident mature adults, capable of realising their potential. Developing a healthy attitude to food, developing positive eating habits is an important part of school life.

**Aims:**

* to encourage a positive attitude to food
* to promote a healthy diet
* to inform adults of the school community about Ballyleague N.S, Whole School Healthy Eating Policy
* To have a happy healthy school community

**Objectives:**

* To enable the children to understand the importance of healthy nutrition for healthy growth and development.
* To enable the children to accept some personal responsibility for making wise choices in adopting a healthy balanced diet.

**Curriculum:**

The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through SPHE. Food and Nutrition is an important part of the Strand Unit: *Taking Care of My Body.* This theme is also dealt with in other subjects such as SESE.

**Implementation of the Policy in School: Management of Lunch Boxes and Packaging.**

* Children eat twice during the school day at 11:00a.m. and 12:30p.m
* Children are encouraged to take a drink before school starts, both before and after school lunch breaks, and before and after P.E. or sporting activities, in order to stay hydrated, during the day.
* To cut down on waste and in keeping with our Green Schools Status, all children are required to have a lunch box, which can be washed and re-used daily.
* Lunch packaging must be kept to a minimum. Avoid using plastic, tin foil, cling film, plastic bags.
* Do not include foil wrapped bars, squeezy juice cartons, or foil wrapped tubes, which are not recyclable and lead to spills and stains.
* All lunch wrappings and any uneaten food must be taken home for disposal.
* All children are required to have a drink bottle which can be washed and re-used every day. Please do not give your child foil wrapped drink containers.
* Please ensure that your child’s drink bottle has a secure lid to minimise time spent cleaning up spills during class.

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| **11:00a.m. Break – Food Dudes Programme is in place for all students.** |
| * Children are required to eat a portion of fruit or veg. A portion fits into the palm of the child’s hand.
* As time is limited, parents should ensure that fruit and veg portions for the younger children are peeled and chopped up into bite size pieces.
* Parents need to be patient and persevere with younger children in developing new eating habits. “New tastes” should be encouraged and trialled at home.
* Don’t confine the Food Dudes break to fruit alone. On alternate days provide veg to develop healthy eating habits.
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| **Healthy Fruit** * Apple
* Mandarin
* Banana
* Grapes
* Pear etc.
 | **Healthy Veg*** Carrots peeled, chopped
* Tomatoes cherry or sliced
* Chopped celery
* Chopped cucumber
* Chopped peppers
 | **Healthy Drinks*** Water
* Flask of soup
* Flask of milk
* Flask of tea
* LOW sugar fruit drink
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| **Please note that grapes MUST BE CUT in HALF LENGTH WISE to avoid being a choking hazard for young children.** |
| **Not Allowed Under Any Circumstances:** fizzy drinks of any kind, Nutella, chocolate spread sandwiches, cereal bars (contain enormous amounts of sugar), crisps of any kind, chewing gum etc. **All products must be nut free please.** |

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| **12:30p.m. Lunch Break for all Students** |
| * Children begin eating at 12:30p.m.
* Children have ten minutes to eat before going outside to play.
* Children are encouraged to focus on the task of eating and drinking during this time.
* Children must eat their own lunch, sharing is discouraged except in exceptional circumstances, when a child may have forgotten his/her lunch.
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| **Healthy Snacks** * whole meal bread preferably
* pitta breads/wraps
* whole meal scones
* soups
* pasta
* salads
* rice
* eggs/lean meat/ tuna/salmon tomatoes/cheese/lettuce etc
* hummus
* home-made low sugar oat meal biscuit
 | **Drinks*** water/milk
* fruit juices can contain enormous amounts of sugar
* pure fruit juice should be diluted
* natural yogurt
* read the yogurt container, some contain very high amounts of sugar.
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| **Nut Free Products Only Please to facilitate children with serious nut allergies.** | **Nut-Free Products Only Please to facilitate children with serious nut allergies.** |
| **Absolutely Not Allowed:*** Chocolate spread sandwiches of any kind
* Nutella or similar product
* Large chocolate bars.
* Whole packets of sweets
* Crisps of any kind
* Chewing Gum
* Fruit Winders
 | **Absolutely Not Allowed:*** Fizzy drinks
* Foil wrapped containers
* Squeezy drink containers
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**Treat Days/Celebrations:** During special events and celebrations, such as Green Flag Day, Annual Cake Bake Sale, Grandparents’ Day, End of Term – on these occasions, foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered. However, staff will remind children that this is “ an occasional “ treat and not “an every day event”.

**Other Considerations: Allergies.** We, in Ballyleague N.S. are aware of children who have food allergies within the school population, particularly nut-allergies. **There is a total ban on nuts and nut products due to serious allergies of some pupils.**

Parents of children who are on special food diets for medical reasons, or who have other allergies are requested to provide the school with as much information as possible about their child’s dietary needs.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

**Role of Parents:**

**-**To provide a healthy well-balanced lunch for children

-To encourage healthy eating

-To inform the school of any child’s special dietary needs

-To fully support Ballyleague N.S. Whole School Healthy Eating Policy.

-To fully implement the treat day element of the policy on treat days only.

-To support the aspects of the policy which relate to children with food allergies.

**Role of Children:**

-to eat their lunch

-to bring home any uneaten lunch and food wrappings for disposal

-to help make their own lunches at home,

-to remind parents of healthy eating policy at home

-to bring a treat to school on treat day only

-to refrain from bringing in unhealthy food and drinks..

**Role of Staff:**

-To promote and encourage healthy eating

-To educate children about healthy eating through teaching the curriculum content in this area as appropriate.

**Communication and Ratification:**

All parents will be notified of the review of this policy. This policy will be published on the school’s website [www.ballyleaguens.com](http://www.ballyleaguens.com). A hard copy will be available to parents on request. This policy will be included in the school’s enrolment pack.

**Ratification and adoption:** This policy was ratified and adopted by the board of management of Ballyleague N.S on ----------------------------------.