**Ballinora N.S. Healthy Nutrition Policy.**

There is a **Healthy Eating** Policy in place in Ballinora N.S. since 2004. It has been an outstanding success thanks to the wonderful support and co-operation of teachers, parents and children alike. The policy was reviewed as part of our School Self Evaluation during the 2021-2022 academic year following consultation with a sample of the parent body, students and teachers of Ballinora N.S. As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme, we encourage the children to become more aware of the need for healthy food in their lunch boxes. In addition to this we encourage students to become aware of the use of packaging in everyday food items. As a Green School, we advocate for everyone connected to our school to act responsibly to protect our environment. With this in mind our school aims to play its role in ensuring our community is healthy. Finally, through our Physical Education programme, we support the physical development and fitness of the children.

It is recognised that **eating habits are established at a young age** so it is essential that young children chose healthy options as early as possible. We believe this should ensure good foundations for health in the present and in the future.

 **We hope:**

* To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living.
* To help the child to appreciate and to develop an awareness of the importance of good nutrition.
* To help the child to help the environment by reusing, reducing and recycling food packaging.
* To raise levels of concentration within class by way of consumption of healthy food and the reduction of sugar intake.

**Aims:**

* To encourage and promote healthy food linked to recommended portions in the food pyramid.
* To live out our Green School commitments through reusing, reducing and recycling food packaging.

**Guidelines:**

* Treats are to be distributed or used as rewards within the school sparingly, with staff cognisant that social rewards which involve attention, praise or thanks are often more highly valued than food.
* Where applicable, students **may be** invited to bring in treats for class celebrations on special occasions such as the final day of term at Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Summer holidays.
* Healthy choice of drink to include water, milk and fruit juices. Please reuse bottled containers and avoid single use plastics.
* The children have a small snack at 10 .50 at which time they are encouraged to eat fruit and/or vegetables.
* The second longer lunch break is at 12. 40. **Mon –Thurs:** Healthy lunches encouraged – fruit, milk, wholemeal bread, etc. As a rule

**No bars, sweets, biscuits, buns**, are allowed, but exceptions are made on special occasions with the class teacher notifying families.

* Sharing of lunches is not allowed for a variety of reasons.
* Optional “Treat” day on **Fridays**: One top shelf item allowed on this day.
* The following foods are not allowed at any time: - Nuts, crisps (including Pringles), chewing gum, lollipops, popcorn and fizzy drinks.
* Any uneaten lunch to be brought home. (Children are also asked to bring packaging home under Green Schools guidelines).

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Bhailenóra on: 03/05/22