

# St Patrick's Primary School, Mullinahoe

## Healthy Breaks Policy

**Healthy breaks for schools**

At this school,  
we are committed  
to healthy eating

At break time we enjoy healthy snacks because they help us grow properly, do our best in school and make us healthy and happy in the future.

<b>Milk</b> All whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk	<b>Water</b> Tap water or unflavoured, still, bottled water	<b>Fruit and vegetables</b> All fresh fruit and vegetables	<b>Bread based snacks</b> White or wholemeal breads spread thinly with a little low-fat spread, plain breadsticks or toast

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St Patrick's Primary School

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## Healthy Breaks Policy

At St. Patrick's Primary School, we want to encourage healthy eating throughout our school community. Educating children on the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise can bring about both immediate and long term improvements to their quality of life.

It is our policy that we promote and encourage healthy lifestyles and therefore healthy eating at break time and lunch time.

We have consulted with parents and staff and as a result have adopted a Healthy Breaks Policy.

We have worked with health professionals to develop this policy.

The Board of Governors are committed to this policy.

**Proper nutrition is essential for good health and effective learning. The benefits of Healthy Eating include:**

- Helps young people develop, grow and do well in school
- Prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as obesity, eating disorders, tooth decay and anaemia
- May help prevent health problems later in life, including heart disease and cancer
- Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating patterns in adulthood can be difficult
- Sitting down to a meal with other children is an important part of a child's social education

## Promoting Healthy Breaks in our School

As part of our Healthy Breaks policy we will continue to encourage the children to:

- ❖ eat **only** fruit, vegetables or bread based products at break time.
- ❖ drink **only** milk or water at break time.

Water should be drunk during the day and fizzy drinks are not allowed to be consumed in school during break times or at any other time of the school day. Fruit drinks etc. are only permitted to be taken at lunchtime.

As part of our Healthy Breaks policy *parents/those with parental responsibility*:

- ❖ Will be provided with useful information on the foods and drinks that are suitable for a break time snack.

The foods and drinks recommended for the Healthy Breaks policy may be suitable for some therapeutic diets. However, the child's dietary requirements devised by the dietician should be adhered to. Special needs and allergies are taken into consideration.

**Other snacks such as crisps, snack bars, cereal bars, biscuits, chocolate bars, sweets will not be consumed at break time.**

**Please do not supply any nut based snack or product as St Patrick's Mullinahoe is a NUT Free School.**

If any issues arise, teachers will consult parents/carers or relevant health professionals for advice. By limiting break time to sugar-free snacks and drinks, we can reduce the number of acid attacks on our children's teeth. Sweets, chocolate and crisps are not encouraged.

Sticking to healthy snacks and drinks can also help towards avoiding other health problems such as obesity, cancer and heart disease. It is impossible for staff to check every child's snack. We rely on our parents to send an appropriate snack following the above guidelines.

Water will be available/allowed in the school as a break time drink and throughout the day. The Healthy Eating messages will also be reinforced throughout the child's school day.

## School Meals

It is important that meals served are nutritionally balanced. Under-nutrition, even in its milder forms, can have detrimental effects on cognitive development, behaviour, concentration and school performance.

The subtle message that pupils receive about food and health from the daily life of school are as important as those given during lessons, e.g. school menus, peer pressure to eat certain snacks in packed lunches.

By working together, we can promote healthier eating habits.

The School Meals' Service promotes healthy eating as the meals provided at lunch time take into account the nutritional guidelines put in place by the Department of Education N.I. and the Education Authority.

## Packed Lunches

Parents and carers are asked to provide well balanced healthy packed lunches for their children. Packed lunches should include some fruit or vegetables e.g. a piece of fruit, dried fruit, cherry tomato, raw carrot, cucumber wedge and only one 'treat'.

Sugary drinks and chocolate snacks should be avoided and fruit juice or diluted squash should be consumed at lunchtimes only.

All uneaten food is kept in the lunch box so parents can check on what their children have eaten.

Only water, milk or diluted juice should be provided.

Fizzy drinks should **NOT** be included in the children's packed lunches.

### **Only one of the following should be included in lunch boxes:**

- Chocolate (including biscuits, sweets and bars)
- Crisps or any packeted savoury snacks high in salt and fat  
e.g. Dunkers, lunchables
- Sweet cakes, e.g. sugary cakes, doughnuts, buns
- 'Fruit Corner style' yoghurts, e.g. Crunch/fruit corner yoghurts, chocolate yoghurts / custard

<b>SUITABLE</b>	Water: tap water/unflavoured, still, bottled water	Milk: whole. Semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk
<b>NOT SUITABLE</b>	Fruit Juices (including pure fruit juice), smoothies, sparkling water, squash, fizzy drinks, even those labelled 'no added' sugar, 'diet' or 'zero'.	

## Dietary Needs

In consultation with parents, a child's dietary requirements devised by a dietician will be adhered to. If any issues arise, teachers will consult parents or relevant health professionals for advice.

## School Ethos, Environment & Organisation

School meals and packed lunches are eaten in the school hall with tables and chairs being set out by the dinner staff.

### The school recognises:

The importance of lunchtime organisation on the behaviour of pupils.

The value of promoting social skills. Teachers, non-teaching staff, canteen staff and lunchtime supervisors work together to create a good dining room ambience and the development of appropriate table manners.

<p><b>Regularly drinking fruit juices, and fizzy drinks</b> (even sugar free ones) will damage teeth. Milk and water are the best drinks</p>	<p><b>Dried Fruit</b> has a high level of hidden sugar in it. It counts towards "5 a day" but has less nutrition and vitamins than fresh fruit.</p>	<p>Children who need to follow a special therapeutic diet are exempt- see the school policy for more information</p>
<p><b>Most Cereal Bars</b> contain high levels of sugar and should be avoided as an everyday snack.</p>	<p><b>Scones, bread muffins and pancakes</b> contain some sugar and present a risk to teeth if taken frequently as a snack</p>	<p><b>Low fat yoghurts</b> often contain a high level of sugar and should be avoided between meals.</p>

## Snack Ideas

Help your child get their five a day by including some fruit or vegetables as a snack for their morning break. This includes all fresh fruit and vegetables and pots or tins of fruit in fruit juice, but NOT in syrup. Make snacks attractive, colourful and varied from day to day to encourage your child to enjoy them more.

A portion could be:	
1 medium sized piece of fruit,	e.g. apple, orange, banana, pear
2 small fruits,	e.g. kiwi fruits, satsumas, plums
1 cup of grapes, cherries or berries	
1 large slice of pineapple or melon	
1 cereal bowl of salad,	e.g. lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and celery
3 heaped tablespoons of fresh veg,	e.g. chopped/sliced carrots, peppers, sugar-snap peas
3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad	(fresh or tinned in fruit juice)

### Fresh Fruit and/or Vegetables:

"Fun-sized" portions of fresh fruit, e.g. banana, apple, pear. Fruity colour kebabs, e.g. strawberries, grapes, pineapple, kiwi. Rainbow fruit pots with a variety of chopped fresh fruit.

Rainbow veggie pots e.g. celery, carrots, peppers, cherry tomatoes. Veggie kebab, e.g. cheese cubes, cucumber, peppers, cherry tomatoes. Celery sticks with a little low fat cream cheese or low fat dip

### Bread Based Snacks (try to make sure fillings are sugar free):

Bread (ideally wheaten or wholegrain), Plain crackers with a thin slice of cheese, tomato or low fat cheese spread. Plain bread sticks or rice cakes (dips such as salsa, natural yoghurt, natural fromage frais) Sandwiches, bread rolls, baguettes, pitta pockets or wraps with non-sugar fillings.

- For younger children (4-6 years), reduce these portion sizes by about half, then increase the amount as they grow.
- Older primary school children should be eating full portions.

### **NOT SUITABLE:**

fruit tinned in syrup, dried fruit (e.g. raisins, sultanas) and processed fruit bars (e.g. fruit winders, fruit flakes etc.). These are high in sugar and can cause tooth decay, so are not suitable as between meal snacks.

Children need more or less energy (calories) depending on their age and stage of development. Bread-based snacks can help to meet these extra energy needs and help your child feel more satisfied. This includes white or wholemeal bread, rolls or baguettes, toast, plain bagels, wheaten, soda, potato or pitta bread, spread thinly with a little margarine, low-fat spread or butter; plain bread sticks or crackers, a small sandwich with a sugar-free filling such as tomato, tuna, chicken, cheese etc.

### **NOT SUITABLE:**

Sugary spreads, including jam, honey, marmalade or chocolate spread as these are harmful to teeth. Peanut butter is high in fat and salt so is not recommended.

### **AVOID:**

Cereal bars, or sweetened breads and pastries, e.g. pancakes, scones (plain and fruit), fruit bread, malt loaf, brioche, croissants and Danish pastries as these contain a lot of sugar and salt.

**At St Patrick's Mullinahoe, healthy eating is delivered within a whole school approach which may include:**

Topics;

- Planned aspects of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU), the World Around Us, PE and other curriculum areas;
- Special assemblies / visits by outside agencies.
- Pastoral time (E.g. Circle Time);
- Extra-curricular activities; and Special projects.

See Attached; **Appendix 1** - HSC Healthy Breaks For Schools Leaflet  
**Appendix 2** - QR Code For free nutrition videos.



# Healthy breaks for schools

A guide for pupils and parents



# What is included in healthy breaks for schools?

## Drinks

It is important that children drink enough during the day, so that they don't become dehydrated and tired. Water should be freely available throughout the school day and drinks should always be included for break time and lunch. Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children.

**Water:** tap water or unflavoured, still, bottled water.

**Milk:** all whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk.

**Not suitable:** fruit juices (including pure fruit juice), smoothies, sparkling water, squash or fizzy drinks, even those labelled 'no added sugar', 'diet' or 'zero'.



## Fruit and vegetables

Help your child get their five a day by including some fruit or vegetables as a snack for their morning break.

This includes all fresh fruit and vegetables and pots or tins of fruit in fruit juice, but not in syrup.

A portion could be:

- 1 medium sized piece of fruit, eg apple, orange, banana, pear
- 2 small fruits, eg kiwi fruits, satsumas, plums
- 1 cup of grapes, cherries or berries
- 1 large slice of pineapple or melon
- 1 cereal bowl of salad, eg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and celery
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fresh veg, eg chopped or sliced carrots, peppers or sugar-snap peas
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad (fresh or tinned in fruit juice)



For younger children (4–6 years), reduce these portion sizes by about half, then increase the amount as they grow. Older primary school children should be eating full portions. To reduce the risk of choking in young children under the age of five years, smaller fruits and vegetables like grapes and cherry tomatoes should be halved by cutting lengthways.

Not suitable: fruit tinned in syrup, dried fruit (eg raisins, sultanas) and processed fruit bars (eg fruit winders, fruit flakes etc). These are high in sugar and can cause tooth decay, so are not suitable as between-meal snacks.

## Bread-based snacks

Children need more or less energy (calories) depending on their age and stage of development. Bread-based snacks can help to meet these extra energy needs and help your child feel more satisfied.

This includes white or wholemeal bread, rolls or baguettes, toast, plain bagels, wheaten, soda, potato or pitta bread, spread thinly with a little margarine, low-fat spread or butter; plain bread sticks, plain crackers or plain unsalted rice cakes; or a small sandwich with a sugar-free filling such as tomato, tuna, chicken, cheese etc.

Not suitable: Sugary spreads, including jam, honey, marmalade or chocolate spread as these are harmful to teeth. Peanut butter is high in fat and salt so is not recommended.

No cereal bars, or sweetened breads and pastries, eg pancakes, scones (plain and fruit), fruit bread, malt loaf, brioche, croissants and Danish pastries as these contain a lot of sugar and/or fat and salt.



The Department of Education and the Department of Health encourage all schools to provide healthier food and drinks throughout the day.

This healthy breaks for schools resource provides guidance on suitable snacks and drinks for children to have during their morning break, whether provided by the school or brought from home.

## Why is a healthy break important?

- Childhood is an important time to establish good eating and drinking habits for future health.
- School healthy eating schemes give pupils the knowledge and opportunity to make healthier choices.
- Teachers have suggested that a healthy snack at break time can help with pupils' concentration and behaviour in the classroom.
- It encourages suitable drinks and snacks to help prevent tooth decay.
- It helps to meet our target of five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

If a child requires a special diet that will not allow the guidance to be met exactly, please discuss with your school.

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