



## HEALTHY EATING POLICY

*What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing long term health of school children and staff. The school day provides the opportunity for having at least one of the daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The curriculum provides an opportunity to learn and explore about food and healthy lifestyles. Through these guidelines Scoil Mhuire gan Smál aims to help all those involved in our school community, e.g. children, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.*

- 1 It is important that children have breakfast before school. The importance of breakfast is to help concentration at school. The following are examples of healthy eating at breakfast time: wholegrain or high fibre cereal or porridge, wholegrain bread or toast with low fat spread, small glass of unsweetened pure fruit juice or fresh fruit. If your child has a good appetite in the morning you could also include a choice of poached egg, scrambled egg or boiled egg.
- 2 A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.
- 3 Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage for the small break include: fresh fruit, vegetables, **cheese**, standard yoghurts (non dessert) and cream crackers.
- 4 Pre-packed cheese and lunch/snacks, chocolate spreads, chocolate/cheese dips and chewy/sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, nuts, crisps are not permitted. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
- 5 Healthier choices of drinks include milk and water. Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones and teeth. For children aged 9-18 years, 5 servings of calcium rich foods are recommended due to the importance of this mineral during this life stage.
- 6 To reduce the risk of tooth decay, pure juices or well diluted (1:10) sugar free squashes may **only** be taken with lunch. Other drinks such as fruit drinks and all fizzy drinks (including diet drinks and sparkling water) should be avoided due to their sugar and/or acid content.
- 7 Friday & Special occasions are treat days. On these days one can have **one small item** from the top shelf of the food pyramid.
- 8 Tuesday is fruit & vegetable day, on this day pupils are encouraged to include fruit & veg as part of their lunch.
- 9 Nutrition & healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.
- 10 Teachers and staff will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
- 11 'Healthy Eating Awareness Days' will be held each term as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
- 12 The '*Healthy Eating Guidelines*' will be reviewed on an annual basis and the policy will be visibly displayed in the school.
- 13 All pupils should aim to participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour everyday.