

MULLAVILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Inspiring, Believing Achieving'

Healthy Eating Policy

AUGUST 2023

Review Date
August 2026

Introduction

Mullavilly Primary School recognises the important connection between a healthy diet and a pupil's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school. We also recognise the role the school can play, as part of the wider community, to assist pupils in making informed choices about what they eat and drink and help them to improve their health and fitness by adopting a healthy diet and lifestyle.

We recognize that it is important for the whole school to use consistent messages around healthy eating. Therefore, our message is:

Healthy eating does not mean NO treats, but it does mean having them at appropriate times and not too often.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide the principles and objectives for a healthy school community. The policy is adopted in the context of:

- Every Child Matters
- EA/DENI Healthy Food Policy
- National statistics drawing attention to concerns about the poor health of many young people
- The relationship between healthy diet and effective learning

Objectives

The school's objectives are:

- To deliver a curriculum that provides information relating to food, nutrition and fitness and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.
- To actively encourage fluid intake with an easily accessible water supply throughout the day.
- To make the consumption of food an enjoyable, safe and socialising experience.
- To promote healthy eating for pupils with lunch boxes and encourage a balanced diet.
- To ensure high standards of hygiene.
- To inform the school community about the school's Healthy Eating Policy, including monthly school menus, through our school website and app.
- To inform the school community about the best practice known regarding healthy eating so that everyone can support the key messages being given to children at school.

This document should be used in conjunction with a range of other school policies and guidelines including:

- Pastoral Care
- Administration of Medication
- First Aid
- Health & Safety
- SEN
- Drugs
- ECO

Role of the Coordinator

The ECO Co-ordinator, whose remit includes healthy eating and healthy living, is Miss L Kelly. The role of the co-ordinator is:

- To ensure that staff and parents are informed about the Healthy Eating Policy, and that the policy is implemented effectively.
- To liaise with external agencies regarding the healthy eating education programme and ensure that all adults who work with children on these issues are aware of the school policy and work within this framework.
- To encourage positive role models amongst the staff by encouraging healthy options for staff 'treats' such as fruit.

Role of the Staff

- To have a good understanding of the school's Healthy Eating Policy.
- To be good role models for promoting healthy eating e.g. drinking water throughout the day and healthy breaks/ lunches.

Role of the Pupils

The ECO committee has an important role in carrying out an annual environmental review of the school which includes "Healthy Living" and developing an action plan to actively promote a healthy lifestyle.

School Prefects assist the school meals kitchen staff in serving milk during lunch time.

Every pupil is required:

- To bring a filled water bottle to school every day.
- To bring a healthy break (fruit and/or vegetables) every day.

Role of the Parents

The school is aware that the primary role model in children's healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation.

- To have a good understanding of the school's Healthy Eating Policy.
- To ensure that every pupil comes to school having eaten a nutritious breakfast.
- To provide a healthy break and a freshly filled water bottle every day.
- To support the school by providing a balanced, healthy packed lunch (where appropriate)
- To adhere to the NUT FREE policy in the school
- To inform the school of any food allergies or relevant medical information.

Role of the Governors

The Governors are responsible for monitoring the Healthy Eating Policy. The Governors support the principal in following guidelines from external agencies. Governors inform and consult with parents about the Healthy Eating Policy as required.

Curriculum

We regard healthy eating education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught in World Around Us, Physical Education, PDMU lessons and class cookery lessons as well as through whole school assemblies.

The school runs an after-school cookery club, in rotation with other clubs, in line with the healthy eating ethos promoted throughout the school.

Mullavilly Primary is an "ECO School", having been awarded its seventh Green Flag in 2018. One of the nine ECO-Schools themes is Healthy Living, which encourages pupils to make healthier food choices and learn about what healthy eating really means. This includes supporting local producers and discussing the use of fair-trade products, which brings in an economic/international dimension to World Around Us and PDMU learning. The school has an ECO Code which is displayed in every classroom and the staffroom.

Outside agencies e.g. Health Promotion Agency, PSNI (CASE Programme), Love for Life, Wally and Wise Roadshow are invited into the school on a regular basis to teach children about the importance of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

Healthy Breaks

As Mullavilly Primary School is a “Health Promoting School” we ask that only the following foods and liquids are consumed at breaktime:

Fruit	Water
Dried fruit	Milk
Vegetables	Healthy sandwiches e.g. ham
Vegetable broth/ soup	Crackers
Bread Sticks	

If your child prefers his/her fruit peeled, this should be done at home and sent to school in a plastic container.

Foods not allowed at breaktime include:

Crisps	Chocolate bars
Sweets	Fizzy drinks
Nuts	Cereal Bars
Sweetened yoghurts, et Petit Filous, Frubes, etc	

Water

Research has proven that pupils’ concentration and attainment improve by drinking water regularly throughout the day.

All children are required to bring a clearly labelled, plastic water bottle into school every day that can be kept in the classroom so that each pupil can have access to water freely without leaving the classroom. For health & safety reasons, pupils are required to take their drink bottles home each day to be washed and refilled. Jugs of water and beakers are provided in the hall each lunchtime. Mains drinking water is fully accessible to all children in every classroom.

The only alternative to water allowed is milk.

School Meals

Mullavilly Primary School has its own School Meals kitchen where school meals are prepared on site and take account of the Nutritional Guidelines for Schools. Every month the menu is monitored by the EA Catering Supervisor.

All children receive a menu detailing the content of school meals for the month ahead and this is available on the school website and app.

The dining room is well staffed with three supervisors who assist the children in a variety of ways such as cutting up food for the younger children and keeping table surfaces clean and tidy. The tables and chairs allow for the pupils to sit in friendship groups promoting the idea that lunch times are a happy, social occasion. Milk and bread is available to the pupils every lunchtime.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunch time and will be given plenty of time to eat. The agreed rules for 'LUNCHES' are as follows:

Line up quietly.
Use good manners
No walking around
Chat quietly
Have respect
Everyone takes responsibility
Stack your plates

Packed Lunches

Pupils' lunch boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Across a week parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods in accordance with the Lunchbox Guidance leaflet issued by the Public Health Agency. The Guidance recommends a balanced selection of foods which include mainly unrefined carbohydrates e.g. bread, pasta, fruit and vegetables (a 'healthier treat' such as a slice of cake or fruit loaf, mini fruit muffin, plain bun, sugar-free jelly pots and yoghurts or pots of custard cake is acceptable occasionally as part of a balanced diet).

We do not allow:

- Chewing gum
- Fizzy drinks
- Nuts (due to allergies)

We strongly discourage children to eat, as part of their packed lunch:

- Sweets
- Chocolate
- Crisps

Special Treats

As part of the behaviour programme run throughout the school, some teachers may, on occasions, reward good behaviour/ work with a small sweet/ chocolate.

Birthdays and special events e.g. Christmas parties, are also times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an 'occasional' treat and not 'everyday food'.

Allergies

The school community is aware of the possibility of food allergies within the school population, particularly nut allergies.

Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or who have allergies, are asked to provide as much information as possible about which foods are suitable or foods which must be avoided on the Pupil Data Collection Form.

Mullavilly Primary School is a **NUT FREE SCHOOL**. We request that no nuts or related products are brought into school for your child's break or packed lunch. Your agreement and compliance with this request could prevent a life-threatening situation from developing.

Hygiene

Children are encouraged to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before handling food. All staff employed in food preparation hold a basic food and hygiene certificate.

Equal Opportunities

The healthy eating and drinking systems and strategies in our school will be accessible to all children and staff regardless of race, gender and SEN.

Parents or carers of children who are on special diets for medical or religious reasons, or children with allergies, will be asked to provide as much information as possible about their diet, this is especially important in relation to the residential trips.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be reviewed and amended as part of the Governor Curriculum responsibilities. Any relevant comments from recent inspection reports, Healthy Schools Initiative status, or other evaluations completed, will also be included in the evaluation and review process.

Adopted and signed on behalf of the Board of Governors	September 2023
Signature of Governor	
Signature of Subject Coordinator / Principal	
Review Date	September 2026