

SCOIL MHUIRE GRANSHA - 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 GRANSHA N.S 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. Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school. (See attached Food Pyramid for your information). 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.
2. A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid – use this information as a guide to selecting from the school’s menu.
3. Some of the healthy snacks choices that we encourage are fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (non dessert), **plain** rice cakes and crackers – use this information as a guide to selecting from the school’s menu.
4. All pupils are encouraged to avail of the EU School Milk Scheme (plain milk only will be offered and all milk cartons will be stored in the refrigerator). Milk is an excellent source of calcium which is the main mineral present in bones & 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.
5. Filtered water will be made available throughout the day. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
6. Pure unsweetened juices or well diluted no added sugar squashes (1 part squash: 10 parts water) / no added sugar juices may be included but only as part of a meal, to reduce the risk of tooth decay. Other drinks such as sweetened fruit juices, fruit drinks, squashes, fizzy drinks (including diet drinks and sparkling water) should be avoided due to their sugar and/or acid content, as these are also harmful to teeth.
7. Chocolate spreads, chocolate/cheese dips and chewy/sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, lollipops, muffins, pastries, apple tart, nuts, crisps, cereal bars, fizzy drinks and juice drinks are not permitted.
8. Friday is “treat day” in Gransha, one small item from the top shelf of the food pyramid is permitted e.g. 1 fun sized bar, small bag of non-salted plain popcorn or a similar sized food item.
9. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
10. Non food rewards and treats are encouraged in Gransha e.g. homework passes, lucky dip, Dojo points etc.

11. Sweet treats for birthdays, such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc should be kept for home celebrations. In the school setting, there may be so many birthdays that sweet treats are available nearly every day.
12. Nutrition and healthy eating will be included as part of a cross curricular approach.
13. The 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' will be reviewed every two years and the policy will be displayed in the school.