



Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School

Roll Number 68346 T

Belmayne Avenue

Dublin 13

Healthy Lifestyle Action Plan

Introduction

This plan is to be managed and aspired to by all in the Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School (BETSS) community. The plan is to be applied across the whole school community to include students and staff. By working to promote the health of all within our school community we are contributing toward the provision of a healthy learning environment. The various issues of health will form part of an expansive curriculum which caters for the diverse needs of the school community.

Our school motto *Stand Proud, Aim High, Be Respectful, No Excuses* is enhanced by our Healthy Lifestyle Plan in BETSS. *Aiming High* is about supporting each other to be the best we can be, whether that be academically, in sport or with our health. In order to achieve this individuals need to be focused, and energised and following a Healthy Lifestyle Plan will help them to do so. It is important that students *Stand Proud* of bringing a healthy lunch to school and are *respectful* to others regarding their healthy food choices. A *No Excuses* approach is expected when students do make a mistake and bring in an item from our list of not allowed items below.

Rationale:

Food and drink are an essential part of our daily lives. They play a fundamental role in the development of the human being. Making the right choices to support our nutrition requirements satisfies our physiological needs, and also contributes to our mental and emotional development. What we eat and drink is directly related to our state of health. Adolescence is a time for developing the skills to make informed choices and decisions throughout life. What we eat and drink is one such choice. Young people need to be aware of the importance of good nutrition for health in order to optimise their growth, health and developmental potential through their teenage years and beyond. By developing a Healthy Lifestyle Action Plan that reflects and represents the whole-school community, BETSS hopes to contribute to this. This policy will be developed in consultation with management, teaching staff, parents and students. The policy is applicable to all when on the school grounds and on school trips as much as possible.

According to the World Health Organisation (2003) "A balanced and appropriate diet during childhood and adolescence is likely to reduce the risk of both immediate and long-term health problems".

Foods eaten at breakfast and lunchtime can affect behaviour in the classroom during the afternoon. Foods high in fats and sugars and especially fizzy drinks may cause over-activity and lead to difficult classroom management and a lack of concentration.

For people to achieve their full potential it is essential that they eat healthily and are active. The encouragement of healthy eating practices and exercise from a young age will help to provide a basis for lifelong health and wellbeing.

Healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well-being. Adolescence is a time of physical growth and development – the most rapid since infancy. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients. Eating a nourishing breakfast and a healthy school lunch allows students to take full advantage of the education provided for them.

Obesity – The Policy Challenges: The Report of the National Task Force on Obesity (2005) highlighted the worrying increase in childhood obesity across Europe. Figures suggest that the number of overweight children in Ireland has trebled over the past decade and may be rising at a rate of 10,000 per year.

Young people spend a large part of the day in school where they eat at least one of their main meals. The home plays the major role in determining healthy eating habits. However, the school, in partnership with parents, can make an important contribution. It is recommended that a whole-school approach be taken in developing a Healthy Lifestyle Action Plan. This creates a strong sense of ownership among students, staff and parents and a commitment to sustain the improvements.

Aims and Objectives

Short Term Aims:

- Educate learners/ parents to allow them to make informed food choices.
- To encourage the nutritional and overall well-being of all in the school
- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet
- To support pupils to develop life-long healthy eating practises and a positive approach towards food
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food
- To monitor and review the schools practise and policy and, if necessary, make amendments
- Encourage all in the school community to be active and exercise regularly.

Long Term Aims:

- Foster positive attitudes towards food and exercise.
- Live a healthy lifestyle.
- Work to achieve our 'Active School' Flag.
- Work to become a 'Health Promoting' school.

Action Plan

Schools can provide a physical and social environment that encourages a healthy lifestyle. It can ensure that lessons learnt in the classroom are transferred into school life and that messages promoting a healthy lifestyle are consistent throughout the school.

Opportunities for unhealthy eating choices within the school environment will not be accommodated. i.e. no vending machines. Fizzy drinks, energy drinks and high-caffeine drinks are not permitted within the school grounds.

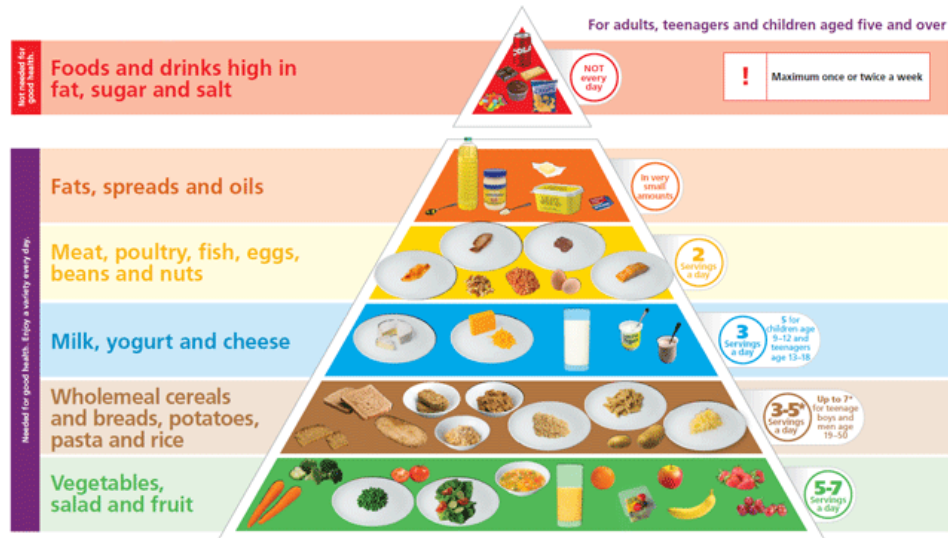
The following food and drinks are allowed in the school:

Food		Drinks
Sandwiches Bread Rice/Pasta Crackers Scones Cereal Bars	Fruit/Veg Cheese Yoghurt Meat Popcorn	Water Milk Natural fruit Juice Yoghurt

The following food and drinks **are not** allowed in the school:

Food		Drinks
Crisps Lollies Cake Chocolate	Nutella Biscuits	Fizzy drinks Isotonic drinks Hi Sugar drinks (Glass containers are not allowed)

The student journal has a section called Healthy Eating Policy to inform students and parents of the Food Pyramid (see below) and what items are not permitted in the school. Teachers will confiscate any food or drink item that is not allowed and the student can collect it at the end of the day to take home.



Food Allergies:

Parents/guardians of any student with food allergies or medical condition which require a special diet must ensure that the school has up to date information of the necessary dietary requirements with appropriate documentation from a medical practitioner (e.g. a letter from your GP with a diagnosis/dietary requirements and the necessary actions to be followed).

Green School

To ensure the school adheres to Green School status students will be encouraged to use reusable lunch boxes and water containers.

Healthy Lifestyle Events

Hosting Healthy Lifestyle Weeks offers an ideal opportunity to provide a variety of healthy eating activities for students, staff and parents. A Healthy Lifestyle awareness week will be held in school on an annual basis. During this week, students will be encouraged to eat more healthily and participate in activities to get them active.

Activities may include:

- inviting guest speakers into the classroom
- offering healthy options
- hosting a healthy-eating cookery demonstrations/competition
- holding art/slogan competitions

The activities deemed to be the most beneficial may be repeated at appropriate times throughout the school year and integrated into school life. Involving a group of students and offering them specific roles in promoting and marketing healthy eating helps to influence the wider student body.

Involve the Wider Community: This helps to provide support and expertise to the school and may help to generate heightened interest in healthy eating locally. Possible ways of involving the wider community are:

- developing initiatives in partnership with local food businesses –e.g. shops and restaurants
- Participating in national youth projects – for example, Young Social Innovators or School Business projects.
- the local media can also play a part by highlighting the school's good work

Support and advise parents: To encourage parents to play a role, it is important to offer them support. This may take many forms. Upon implementation of the plan, parents will be emailed information on healthy lifestyles. This

information will also be made available to them via the school website. The information will include a guide on how to use the food pyramid to create healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks for learners, examples of suitable foods and recipes, and ideas for getting active.

Reward Systems: Students will be actively encouraged to eat healthily and be active in school. Members of staff will be mindful of this and will give learners a 'praise' when they notice that they are making an effort to eat healthily/ be active to encourage them to keep up this effort. These praises will be recorded on VSWare to include students who walk, cycle or scoot to school.

Encouragement: Learners will be actively encouraged to walk/ cycle to school where possible. We will provide learners with a locked bike rack. Further to this, learners are encouraged to be active at break and lunchtime.

Extra- Curricular: Extra- Curricular activities are valued in BETSS. Teachers will organise activities after school and students are encouraged to participate as much as possible.

Teaching and Learning

The classroom should be used to inform the whole-school practice and help instigate change. Health education is not only about delivering information but also about developing the skills and confidence required to make healthy choices and be active.

- **Subject areas:** The subject of healthy lifestyle is addressed to varying degrees in many subject areas that offer a unique opportunity for teachers to influence young people in this regard. Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education (PE) are examples of subjects on the curriculum for post-primary schools that address aspects of diet, nutrition, physical activity and health. In addition to this a 'Healthy Eating' module will be conducted with all learners to support the implementation of this plan.
- **Cross-curricular projects:** These provide valuable learning opportunities. Examples of cross-curricular links include: English (Media Studies), Business Studies (needs and wants) and Art (visual-communication). To maximise the potential of teaching and learning opportunities, it is best to plan the curriculum framework in a coordinated way which supports the Healthy Eating Plan. Planning should address specific learning outcomes in terms of content covered, teaching methods and time allocation, to maximise the influence of these classes and reaffirm consistent key messages.

Roles and Responsibility

The policy is promoted by all staff in the school in their classroom work. Specific guidelines are presented to students at general assemblies and to parents at the beginning of the school year to encourage a healthy lunch-box/healthy eating. Feedback will be presented to the principal at staff meetings and at parent association meetings in terms of the implementation and success. All special dietary requirements will be respected inclusive of dietary needs and cultural dietary habits. These requirements must be communicated to the Principal/Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

Hot drinks and bottles of water may be consumed on school premises.

Staff have the right to confiscate fizzy drinks and high-caffeine drinks or any other foods deemed inappropriate, from students on school grounds.

The Principal will regularly inform pupils in school assemblies of the importance of healthy eating and healthy lunches. The initiative will be monitored by the Principal having considered feedback from staff and parents on its continuation and on how the initiative can be further enhanced and improved.

Overview - A Healthy Lunch











The following foods do not support a healthy lunch plan and should be excluded from a student's lunch box: crisps, chewing gum, sweets, bars including cereal bars, cakes, biscuits, lollipops, chocolate, chocolate spread and jellies, artificially sweetened drinks/ fizzy drinks.

A lot of foods may seem healthy but actually contain a lot of hidden sugar, salt and fat. Foods high in fat, sugar and salt will not be permitted in BETSS.

A healthy lunch box includes:

The following foods do not support a healthy lunch plan and should be excluded from lunch boxes; crisps, chewing gum, sweets, bars including cereal bars high in sugar, cakes, biscuits, lollipops, chocolate, chocolate spread and jellies, artificially sweetened drinks/ fizzy drinks.

Below is an example of a 5 day lunch box planner:

MONDAY								
1 medium bread roll with chicken and lettuce	+		+	Handful of carrot sticks	+	Pot of low fat yoghurt	+	
TUESDAY								
Small pitta bread with tuna and sweetcorn	+		+	½ wholemeal scone	+		+	Carton of milk
WEDNESDAY								
2 tablespoons of pasta with 1 tablespoon of dried fruit	+		+	2 crackers with low fat cheddar cheese	+		+	Carton of unsweetened fruit juice
THURSDAY								
2 slices of bread with cooked ham and lettuce	+	Small container of fruit in its own juice	+		+	Yoghurt	+	
FRIDAY								
Tortilla wrap with chicken, sliced peppers and lettuce	+		+	Small tub of stewed fruit	+	6 cherry tomatoes	+	

Healthy snack options (Lower in sugar and fat)

Sometimes it can be difficult to think of alternatives to these types of food. Here are some tasty alternatives.

- Fruit (for example, an apple or banana, handful of grapes)
- Washed, raw vegetable pieces (for example, sticks of carrot, celery, pepper and cucumber).

- Washed, raw vegetables (for example, cherry tomatoes)
- Half a tin of fruit (in its own juice, not sweetened)
- Plain breadsticks, unsalted plain or whole-wheat crackers, crispbreads or water biscuits served with fruit or cheese.
- Rice cakes (not chocolate flavoured)
- Yogurt with fresh fruit (fresh, frozen or tinned in its own juice)
- Pasta or rice
- Cheese /Hummus

We encourage students to bring water to school on a daily basis. For variety, fruit juice and milk are also permitted at school. Students will be encouraged to use reusable containers for environmental and litter reasons. Cans and glass bottles are not permitted.

Compliance with the Plan

Students bringing in inappropriate lunches will be asked to bring these food items home at the end of the day. (Staff may confiscate the item and return it at the end of the day).

Parents/guardians of students who persistently bring food that is not allowed under this plan will be asked to meet the tutor to discuss the matter further.

Review and Evaluation This Healthy Lifestyle Plan will be reviewed on an on-going basis and may be amended following consultation with the school community.

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management