

Healthy Eating Policy

**Kilbonane National School
Knocknahilan
Aherla
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Rationale

As part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Programme, Kilbonane National School encourages children to develop an awareness of the importance of healthy food. Research shows a strong link between diet and performance (e.g., low sugar intake promotes concentration, reduces hyperactivity, protects teeth, and lowers the risk of diabetes and heart disease). To support this, we have introduced a Healthy Eating Policy that now includes hot meals provided by **Ashdale Catering**, alongside our existing packed lunch guidelines.

Aims

1. To promote the personal development and well-being of each child.
2. To promote the health of the child and provide a foundation for healthy living.

Objectives

1. To enable the child to appreciate the importance of good nutrition for growth, development, and staying healthy.
2. To enable the child to accept personal responsibility for making wise food choices and adopting a healthy, balanced diet.

Healthy Eating Guidelines

1. Hot School Meals (Ashdale Catering)

Kilbonane National School now offers **hot meals** through **Ashdale Catering**, in line with the **Department of Education's School Meals Programme** and **Healthy Ireland Guidelines**. These meals are designed to be **nutritious, balanced, and child-friendly**, with the following standards:

- **Vegetables and salads** included in every meal.
- **Lean proteins** (e.g., chicken, fish, beans, lentils).
- **Wholegrain carbohydrates** (e.g., brown rice, wholemeal pasta, wholemeal bread).
- **Limited processed foods** (no deep-fried items, minimal added sugars or salts).
- **Desserts** (if provided) will be **fruit-based or low in sugar** (e.g., yogurt, fresh fruit).
- **Drinks**: Water or milk as the primary options.

Allergens and Dietary Needs:

- All meals will **clearly label allergens** (e.g., gluten, dairy, nuts).
- **Alternative meal options** will be available for pupils with **medical or dietary requirements** (e.g., vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy-free).

2. Packed Lunches

For children bringing packed lunches, we encourage parents to follow these guidelines:

Recommended Foods:

- **Bread & Alternatives:** Wholemeal bread, rolls, rice (wholegrain), pasta (wholegrain), potato salad, wholemeal scones, breadsticks, crackers, pitta bread, plain rice cakes/corn cakes.
- **Savouries:** Lean meat, chicken/turkey, tinned fish (e.g., tuna/sardines), cheese, soup, houmous.
- **Fruit & Vegetables:** Apples, bananas, peaches, mandarins, orange segments, fruit salad, dried fruit, plum, pineapple cubes, grapes, cucumber, sweetcorn, tomato, coleslaw.
- **Drinks:** Milk, water, or **low-sugar fruit juices/squashes**.

Foods to Avoid:

To promote a healthy environment, we ask that children **do not bring** the following:

- Crisps (including crisp-style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks (including fizzy fruit-flavoured water or juices)
- Sweets
- Chocolate biscuits/bars
- Cereal bars
- Croissants/Brioche/Pastries
- Liga
- Flapjacks
- Hot deli food
- Tubs of custard/jelly
- Chocolate yoghurts/dessert-style yoghurts
- Chewing gum

3. Nut-Free School

Since the **2021-22 academic year**, Kilbonane is a **Nut-Free School**. The following items **should not be brought into school**:

- Nutella
- Packets of nuts
- Peanut butter
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts (e.g., Tracker bars)
- Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts

A very simple approach to healthy eating is to use the Food Pyramid:

Fats Sugar Sweets etc.	Sparingly
Meat, Fish Peas/Beans	2 portions per day
Milk, Cheese Yoghurt	3+ portions per day
Fruit & Vegetables	4+ portions per day
Bread, Cereals & Potatoes	6+ portions per day

Healthy Eating at School



4. Treat Day

- **Friday** will be our **treat day**. On this day, children may include **one small item** from the 'not allowed' list.
- **Note:** Parents/guardians are asked **not to send in treats** for the class on birthdays or special occasions.

5. Green Flag School Initiatives

Children are asked to:

- Take home all uneaten food, wrappers, and containers in their lunchboxes.
- Not bring in cans or glass for safety reasons.

6. Special Diets

Parents/guardians of any child with a **medical condition requiring a special diet** should contact the school to arrange suitable alternatives.

7. Review

This policy was **revised and approved by the Board of Management on 22 September 2026**. It will be **reviewed as necessary** to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our school community.

Chairperson:

Principal: