

Mercy Primary School
St Francis Street
Galway
H91RX32
Tel. 091-566452
info@mercyprimary.ie
www.mercyprimary.ie
Roll No.: 04515G

Healthy Eating and Birthday Party Policy

Introduction:

This policy was drawn up in consultation with staff, parents, students and the Board of Management of Mercy Primary.

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up in order to ensure that the children eat a healthy, well balanced lunch, thus promoting a healthy lifestyle from a young age. A healthy and nutritious lunch will help the child's concentration during the school day. By encouraging healthy eating patterns, we educate children for later life.

Aims:

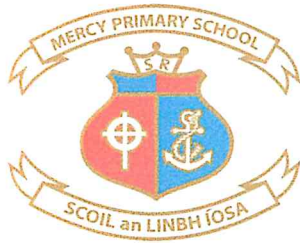
By developing this policy, the school aims to:

- To raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and drinking
- To ensure consistency in terms of healthy lunches throughout the school
- To develop lifelong healthy eating habit

Guidelines:

- * Parents are advised when enrolling their child in this school that only healthy foods and water or milk are permitted for school lunches
- * Some guidance and suggestions are included in our Welcome Booklet and website
- * Each year The Healthy Food Pyramid will be referred to regularly in class by the teachers
- * Fizzy drinks and fruit juices not allowed: milk and water only
- * The 4Cs are not allowed: Chewing gum, Crisps, Chocolate Bars and Candy.
- * In order to promote Healthy teeth children drink only water or milk with their lunch – no fruit juices, fizzy drinks and especially no energy drinks. Occasionally teachers may give treats for a class party, etc.
- * In order to adhere to our Health and Safety Policy children will not be permitted to bring hot drinks onto the school premises in takeaway cups to prevent burns and scalds.

Mercy Primary is a Green School, and we create a little waste as possible. Children are requested to take home all used lunch wrappers, cartons, crusts etc. in their lunch box. This can be a useful indicator for you to know how much your child has eaten at snack times. This will change from September 2025 when all children will be supplied with a Tupperware box to bring home the remains of their hot lunch. Again this will serve as an indicator to parents to know how much food your child has eaten throughout the day. Children should also be encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle for their drink.



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Reference to other policies and/or plans:

This policy will link to the school's SPHE policy and also to the SESE policy with reference to our school's rooftop organic Garden, where the children learn the benefits of safely growing fruit and vegetables, as an incentive to encourage an interest in healthy eating. This Healthy eating and drinking school policy supports class-work on promotion of dental health and hygiene. This policy also supports our Health and Safety policy as children are encouraged not to share lunches in the case of allergies.

Success Criteria:

- Identify some practical indicators of the success of the policy.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils in relation to the development of healthy eating habits.
- Observation of children eating healthy lunches daily.
- Improved report from school dentist – decrease in incidence of tooth decay

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents:

- To encourage children to choose a variety of well-balanced lunch options from the menu provided.
- To encourage healthy eating and drinking
- To inform the school of any child's special dietary needs or of a child's allergies.
- To support school policy by not allowing their children to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars/ foods containing chocolate, fizzy drinks or sweets to school
- * To encourage children not to share lunches in case of allergies

Children:

- To eat their lunch
- To bring home any uneaten lunch
- To bring fruit and vegetables for lunch as much as possible
- To help remind parents of the Healthy Lunch Policy and remind parents that they should only drink water or milk at school
- Not to bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks to school
- * To be aware that they should not share lunches in case of allergies.

Principal & Teachers:

- To help children understand the benefits of healthy eating and drinking
- To promote and encourage healthy eating and drinking
- If children bring chewing gum, crisps, chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks to school they will not be allowed to have them while in school.
- To remind staff to encourage children to include fruit and vegetables in their lunches

Principal: Evelyn O' Toole

Deputy Principal: Lorna Crehan



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- To check that lunches are being eaten and that children's lunches are sufficient and healthy to support their healthy growth and development.

- * To ensure that children don't share lunches.

Board of Management

- To support the implementation of this Healthy Eating policy and encourage uptake of any Healthy Eating initiative

Birthday Cakes / Distribution of Party Invitations:

From this September (2025), to ensure the safety of all children in our care, we can no longer allow families to bring Birthday cakes or treat bags to school to celebrate a child's birthday as we need to ensure that our children with allergies don't come into contact with nut / egg products. We kindly ask parents to distribute birthday party invitations themselves as teachers cannot help out in this regard.

Ratification and Communication:

This policy was ratified by the BoM on May 28th 2025 and communicated to the school community via the school website. This policy will also be circulated to parents at the September Class Group meetings. Hard copies are available on request.

Review:

Policy will be reviewed annually or as circumstances dictate, review to be initiated by the principal, relevant assistant principal(s) or individual teacher / staff member in the context of the success criteria.

Signed: Myles McHugh

Myles McHugh, Chairperson

Date: 28th May 2025