



Harmony Hill Primary School

Healthy Eating Policy

2026-2029

Background Rationale

In 2013, the DE and DHSSPS Food in Schools Policy was introduced. The Food in Schools Policy is an overarching policy advocating a 'whole-school approach' to all food provided and consumed in schools and developing knowledge and skills in relation to healthy eating and lifestyles.

This policy is underpinned by the foundation that 'a healthy, balanced diet makes an important contribution to children's growth and development, to their educational performance and attainment and to their long-term health and well-being. The relationship between poor health, nutrition and low school achievement is well-documented.'

Research demonstrates that children who are obese or overweight are more at risk of being obese as adults and of developing a range of related health problems.

The staff and Governors of Harmony Hill Primary school believe we play a key role in teaching and influencing children about -

- the importance of a balanced diet.
- how to make healthy food choices and the impacts of poor diet on health.
- the importance of children taking responsibility for their personal development and emotional wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- ensuring that we provide an environment through which our children can learn, take steps to enhance their health and well-being and, whilst doing so, reach their full potential in terms of educational and health outcomes.
- adopting a whole school approach to food and nutrition.
- ensuring children have access to free, fresh drinking water at all times, to improve nutrition, concentration and tackle tooth decay.
- supporting our children to develop the knowledge and skills to encourage them to eat healthily and make healthy choices, not just within school but outside as well.
- ensuring age-appropriate, regular and 'whole school' messages around the importance of healthy eating, through relevant and rich curriculum experiences.
- nurturing a supportive learning environment which facilitates enhanced health and educational outcomes for current and future generations.
- promoting healthy lifestyle choices, the importance of physical activity and overall wellbeing through focused activities- e.g. 'Healthy Lifestyle Week', Sustrans Big Walk and Wheel, Sports Day, Wellbeing Walk
- respecting that for many children the food they eat has implications beyond its nutritional content. This may be because of disability, medical conditions or allergies or for religious and cultural reasons.
- ensuring systems are in place to manage the needs of children with allergies to specific foods. This will involve active engagement with parents and EA School Meals Service staff.

Harmony Hill 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.

Education Authority School Meals Service

Parents may book school meals through the online [School Money System](#), which also has an integrated Dietary Requirement Form.

The Education Authority School Meals Service is committed to promoting the established Nutritional Standards for School Lunches.

Food Treats

Celebration occasions are an important and enjoyable part of school life, and we encourage children to approach them with a healthy, balanced mindset. We teach children that no single food is "good" or "bad," but that special treats are best enjoyed occasionally and in moderation as part of a varied and nutritious diet. Pupils are supported to make positive choices, such as enjoying smaller portions, balancing treats with healthy meals and active play, and recognising how different foods make them feel. We also promote a wide range of ways to celebrate, including non-food treats. These approaches help children understand that enjoyment and reward can come from experiences, relationships, and achievements, not just food.

For parents, we encourage supporting this balanced approach by providing treats in reasonable portions, avoiding the use of sweets or sugary foods as rewards, and considering alternatives for birthdays and celebrations.. Parents can also model positive attitudes by speaking about food in a neutral way, encouraging children to listen to their bodies, and ensuring that celebration days are balanced with regular healthy meals and active play. By working together, we can help children develop lifelong skills to enjoy celebrations in a confident, healthy, and positive way.

Meals provided by the School Meals Service are normally eaten in the school canteen.

The Nutritional Standards for School Lunches acknowledges that some religions and ethnic groups may have different dietary requirements because of specific food rules and observances. The School Meals Service School should ensure that school meals can accommodate those beliefs. Parents, or those with parental responsibility, are encouraged to make an appointment with **Mrs A Quinn, EA Catering Supervisor** for Harmony Hill Primary School, to discuss any specific requirements.

The Nutritional Standards for School Lunches also raise awareness and allow flexibility where a child has a special dietary requirement as a result of a disability, medical condition or allergy. The EA Catering Service uses the guide 'Safe Catering' developed by the Food Standards Agency and the School Meals Service Management provide ongoing training and awareness for their staff catering teams. The level of training provided is commensurate with the grade of staff and relates to special diets, allergies and catering for multi-cultural needs. Again, parents, or those with parental responsibility, are encouraged to make an appointment with **Mrs A Quinn, EA Catering Supervisor** for Harmony Hill Primary School, to discuss any specific requirements.

Mrs E McKee, a member of teaching staff, provides an additional link between parents and EA Catering Staff and may be contacted through the school office to discuss any concerns or particular requirements.

Free School Meals

Free School Meals / School Uniform / Physical Education Clothing applications can now be made online by clicking the link below.

Parents/Guardians who have a child/children already entitled to free school meals during this current school year, also need to apply for these children (as well as any additional children) for subsequent academic years (i.e. apply every year). Please include in your application all children for whom you have parental responsibility and who will be attending full time at school

<https://freeschoolmealsanduniforms.eani.org.uk/#no-back>

Sleepy Hollow Breakfast Club

We endorse that eating a healthy breakfast is important for a healthy balanced diet and to prepare children for learning by improving levels of concentration. Our school Breakfast Club is provided by the external company 'Sleepy Hollow'. Broader details are available on our school [website](#).

Sleepy Hollow staff also comply with the guidance for promoting healthy food, respect for religious requirements and essential systems to safeguard any children with food allergies or specific dietary needs.

This commitment and practice continues on into any snacks given during after-school care.

Links with other curriculum areas

We believe that the promotion of Healthy Eating can only be truly effective within the context of wider personal development and emotional health and wellbeing and linked closely to our Physical Education Policy. Healthy Eating must extend to inspiring children to develop a

positive mind-set towards healthy lifestyles, and this is actively promoted through World Around Us topics, PDMU units, Religious Education and Assemblies; teacher-led or by an outside visitor/facilitator.

Furthermore, through our Eco-Garden, pupils have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and herbs. This is tended to by our Eco-Schools committee.

The curriculum is addressed through:

a) Teaching Methods

Effective teaching requires pupils to develop their understanding of healthy eating issues and appropriate skills and attitudes to assist them in making informed decisions. Teaching methods adopted in the classroom will offer a rich variety of opportunities for participatory learning.

b) Leading by example and staff training

Teachers, Classroom Assistants and Canteen Staff all have a key role in influencing pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes about food and are familiar with our school healthy eating guidelines.

c) Health Promotion Agencies

The school appreciates the valuable contribution of outside agencies, in supporting class teachers in promoting healthy eating. A variety of lifestyle programmes will be presented annually in school by various organisations.

Parental Involvement

Parents have an essential role in supporting the implementation of our whole school approach to healthy eating and we value this partnership. Parents are encouraged to provide breaktime snacks from the list attached, and to be supportive of ensuring that any packed lunches are also healthy.

'Smart Snack' list

Below is a list of foods which your child can bring to school each day. We are refreshing our whole school approach to healthy eating/healthy lifestyle and we hope you can support our efforts in ensuring our children are having a 'Smart Snack' 5 days a week!

- Any fruit or vegetable – The list is endless!
- Dried fruits e.g. raisins, apricots, mango, etc.
- Yoghurt/yoghurt drinks- Fruit corner yoghurts acceptable
- Cheese e.g. cheese string, babybel, Philadelphia
- Plain biscuit- Yoghurt topping/coating acceptable
- Crackers- Cheese spread, humous and butter are suitable as toppings
- Flatbread/seeded crackers
- Plain brioche
- Pitta bread/Veda/wheaten bread/potato bread/ wholemeal bread and rolls/pancake
- Cereal- No chocolate coated cereal
- Bread sticks
- Sandwiches- ham/ cheese/ chicken/ tuna/ tomato, etc
- Pasta
- Granola/Granola bar
- Plain Belvita- No chocolate chips
- Rice cakes- No chocolate toppings/coatings
- Plain pretzels
- Drinks- water, milk or smoothie
- Plain or fruit baked goods e.g. muffin, bun
- Fruit loaf

Please note-

NUTS are not allowed in school.

Water is the only drink allowed on a pupil's desk throughout the day.

1 or 2 smart snacks for break time would be a suggestion.

ITEMS NOT SUITABLE-

- *Crisps*
- *Sweets*
- *Chocolate bars/ chocolate snacks*
- *Chocolate spreads (as a topping/ or coated on foods/contained within the food)*
- *Cupcakes, cookies, chocolate coated biscuits*
- *Soft drinks/ Juice*

APPENDIX-

Food in Schools Policy “Healthy Food in Healthy Outcomes” -September 2013

The principal aim of the Food in Schools Policy, in line with Fit Futures, is to ensure that “Food in schools is representative of the balance of good health and makes a significant contribution to childhood nutrition and that schools contribute to the development of the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to make healthy food choices.

The priorities, recommendations and outcomes within ‘Fit Futures: focus on food, activity and young people’ have been included and taken forward through the ‘Framework for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland 2012-2022 – A Fitter Future For All’ which was launched in March 2012. This Framework takes a life course approach to tackling the rising prevalence of overweight and obesity throughout the entire population of Northern Ireland and can be accessed at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/framework-preventing-addressingoverweight-obesity-ni-2012-2022.pdf

‘Are you packing a healthy lunch?’: This booklet is designed to improve pupils’ nutrition and implement healthier eating and drinking practices. It contains practical tips for parents, carers and children on how to pack an appetising, healthy lunchbox. The booklet includes the Eatwell Guide.



The NHS [Change 4 Life website](#) also provides information on healthy packed lunches.

Healthier lunchbox recipes

Get loads of easy-to-prepare ideas your kids will love, as well as tips on what else to put in their lunchbox



Information from Public Health Agency: [Healthy eating resources to help parents](#)

Scan the QR code for **FREE nutrition videos***

*Made by Registered Dietitians and Nutritionists for Parents and Teachers.



Or search Public Health Dietitians on YouTube.



- Feeding Under 5s
- Fussy Eating
- Lunch & snack ideas
- Healthy Eating during the primary school years
- Nutrition for Teenagers

HSC Health and Social Care Public Health Dietitians Group HSC Public Health Agency
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