



Coagh Primary School

Healthy Eating Policy

Policy Updated- May 2026
Review of Policy- May 2029

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Introduction

As a Health Promoting School, Coagh Primary School is committed to encouraging and developing positive attitudes towards food and a healthy diet. We appreciate that promoting a healthy life style is integral to our curriculum and we recognise the importance of offering children the opportunity to make informed choices about what, when, where and why they eat.

As a school we know that food is fundamental to the quality of a child's life, not just in providing essential nutrition but in communicating and sharing positive values, attitudes and experiences with each other. We believe that adults (staff, parents and carers) should be good role models and should support the children in understanding how balanced nutrition contributes to a person's health, happiness and general well-being.

Coagh Primary School complies fully with the Department of Education (NI) 'Healthy Food for Healthy Outcomes – Food in Schools Policy' and with the Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and the Nutritional Standards for Other Food and Drinks in Schools, which apply to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. The school adopts a whole-school approach to healthy eating, ensuring consistent messages are promoted through the curriculum, school routines, food provision and the dining experience.

Aims and Objectives

- To improve the health of pupils, staff and the whole school community by helping to influence eating habits through increasing knowledge and awareness of food issues including what constitutes a healthy diet.
- To ensure pupils are well nourished at school and that every pupil has access to safe, tasty and nutritious food and free, fresh drinking water throughout the school day.
- To ensure that food provision in the school acknowledges the ethical and medical requirements of staff and pupils e.g. religious, vegetarian, medical and allergenic needs.
- To introduce and promote practices within the school to reinforce these aims and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

Organisation – Curriculum

- We regard healthy eating education as a whole-school issue, and we believe that opportunities to teach about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle occur throughout the curriculum.
- Healthy eating education forms an important part of our school's curriculum. The importance of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices is explicitly taught through the World Around Us and PDMU curriculum.
- All pupils have the opportunity to learn about safe food preparation and to learn about where food has come from. Pupils learn about the requirements for plant growth, the food chain and the components of a healthy diet through the World Around Us curriculum
- Healthy eating is further reinforced through assemblies, school routines and the dining experience, supporting a consistent whole-school message.

Organisation – Management of Eating

At Coagh Primary School, we have agreed the following statements:

To ensure consistency across the school, all pupils will also be encouraged to eat only fruit, dairy, vegetables or bread based products at break time.

All children are encouraged to bring in a water bottle so they can have access to water throughout the day. A water fountain is also provided in the school for additional access to drinking water.

Pupils will only drink milk or water at break time.

Chocolate, sweets, biscuits, crisps and cakes are not permitted as everyday break-time snacks or as part of lunch boxes. Chewing gum and fizzy drinks are not permitted on the school premises or while pupils are representing the school.

Cereal bars and cereals are discouraged, unless clearly labelled as low-sugar options, as many contain high levels of sugar

Pupils' lunch boxes should offer balanced nutrition. Across a week parents are encouraged to offer a variety of healthy foods in accordance with the Lunchbox Guidance leaflet which are provided to parents at the beginning of school. The Guidance recommends a balanced selection of foods which should be available to the children in their lunch box.

Because we recognise that there is no such thing as "bad food", we teach the children to enjoy treats in moderation.

Birthdays, and special events such as Christmas parties in class are times where food contributes to a sense of celebration and sharing. On these occasions foods other than fruit or vegetables may be offered, but the staff will remind the children that this is an "occasional" treat and not "every day food".

The school community recognises the potential risk posed by food allergies, particularly nut allergies. Parents or carers of pupils with medical, religious or dietary needs, including allergies, are asked to provide full and up-to-date information on suitable and unsuitable foods. Where appropriate, Individual Healthcare Plans will be implemented and staff informed in line with Education Authority guidance.

Pupils are taught not to share packed lunches and parents are reminded about the need to avoid sending in packed lunches containing nuts. This is communicated through the newsletter.

Portion – no child is made to finish all the food that they are offered because we know that appetites vary from person to person. However, we do actively encourage the children to "try a little bit more" so they can ensure that they are not hungry later on in the day.

School Meals

School dinners are prepared at Cookstown Primary School and delivered daily to Coagh Primary School. We work closely with kitchen staff to ensure meals meet Department of Education Nutritional Standards for School Lunches. Each day, pupils are offered a choice of salads and fresh fruit. Menus follow statutory guidance determining the type and balance of food available throughout the week.

The monthly school lunch menu is displayed in the main entrance for parents and carers.

Staff monitor meal quality and dining experiences regularly, providing feedback to catering staff as appropriate.

School Dinners – Coagh Primary School Lunchtime Manifesto

We;

- Give the children time and space to eat in a calm environment

- Help the children to see that enjoying food and eating meals with others contributes to a happy lifestyle
- Encourage the children to find out more about achieving a healthy balance
- Encourage the children to try new foods and flavours in a supportive environment
- Promote school food to children and parents

The dining room is well staffed with lunchtime supervisors who assist the children in a variety of ways such as opening yogurt lids or helping the children with drinks, keeping table surfaces clean and tidy etc.

Children will be encouraged to develop good eating skills and table manners at lunch time and will be given plenty of time to eat. This will be achieved by:

- Sitting freely with their friends.
- Being encouraged to try a wide range of foods at lunchtimes to develop a taste for a greater variety of foods and achieve a balanced diet.
- Entering and leaving the dining hall in an orderly way; to show respect for other diners
- Parents or carers will be advised if their child is not eating well
- Demonstrating good manners in the hall e.g. using quiet partner voices and saying “please” and “thank you” to the cooks, supervisors and other pupils
- Seeking permission from lunch time Supervisors before eating dessert and leaving the table

The role of Coagh Primary School and its Staff

- To ensure that parents and pupils are informed about the healthy eating policy and that the policy is implemented effectively.
- Liaise with external agencies regarding healthy lifestyle education.
- Ensure they are a positive role model for all pupils by enjoying a healthy break and lunch.
- Not accept sponsorship from companies which may undermine the healthy eating ethos of the school.

The role of parents

Coagh Primary School is aware that the primary role model in children’s healthy eating education lies with parents. We wish to build a positive and supportive relationship with the parents of children at our school through mutual understanding, trust and co-operation. In promoting this objective, we will:

- Inform parents about the school healthy eating policy and practice;
- Encourage parents to be involved in reviewing school policy and making modifications to it as necessary;
- Inform parents about the best practice known with regard to healthy eating so that the parents can support the key messages being given to children at school. Leaflets from Public Health Agency (See Appendix 1 and 2) will be displayed in school and sent home at the start of P1 and a reminder leaflet will be sent home again in P4.

The role of Governors

The Board of Governors is responsible for monitoring the healthy eating policy. The governors support the Principal and staff in following guidelines from external agencies. Governors will inform and consult with parents about the healthy eating policy as required.

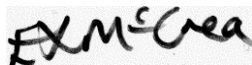
Consultation, Monitoring and Evaluation

The effective implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal, the staff at Coagh Primary School and the Board of Governors.

The policy will be reviewed every three years through a survey of the views of the whole school community, particularly the views of pupils. This will take place through assemblies, in class discussion and school council.

The Board of Governors discussed this Policy at a Meeting on 5th May 2026 and it was signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

Signed:

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. McAra'.

(Chairman of Board of Governors)

Signed:

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a cursive name.

(Principal)

Date: 5th May 2026

Healthy breaks for schools

At this school,
we are committed
to healthy eating

At break time we enjoy healthy snacks because they help us grow properly, do our best in school and make us healthy and happy in the future.



Milk

All whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk



Water

Tap water or unflavoured, still, bottled water



Fruit and vegetables

All fresh fruit and vegetables



Bread based snacks

White or wholemeal breads spread thinly with a little low-fat spread, plain breadsticks or toast



Public Health Agency
12-133 Liverpool Street, Dublin D02 E992
Tel: 00353 1 854 0114 Fax: 00353 1 854 0115
www.hsc.ie/hscpublic



Appendix 2- Booklet given to all new Pupils at the start of each academic year (Public Health Agency)

Healthy breaks for schools

A guide for pupils and parents



HSC Public Health Agency

school food

What is included in healthy breaks for schools?

Drinks

It is important that children drink enough during the day, so that they don't become dehydrated and tired. Water should be freely available throughout the school day and drinks should always be included for break time and lunch. Water and milk are the most suitable drinks for children.

Water: tap water or unflavoured, still, bottled water.

Milk: all whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed unflavoured milk.

Not suitable: fruit juices (including pure fruit juice), smoothies, sparkling water, squash or fizzy drinks, even those labelled 'no added sugar', 'diet' or 'zero'.



Fruit and vegetables

Help your child get their five a day by including some fruit or vegetables as a snack for their morning break.

This includes all fresh fruit and vegetables and pots or tins of fruit in fruit juice, but not in syrup.

A portion could be:

- 1 medium sized piece of fruit, eg apple, orange, banana, pear
- 2 small fruits, eg kiwi fruits, satsumas, plums
- 1 cup of grapes, cherries or berries
- 1 large slice of pineapple or melon
- 1 cereal bowl of salad, eg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and celery
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fresh veg, eg chopped or sliced carrots, peppers or sugar-snap peas
- 3 heaped tablespoons of fruit salad (fresh or tinned in fruit juice)



For younger children (4–6 years), reduce these portion sizes by about half, then increase the amount as they grow. Older primary school children should be eating full portions. To reduce the risk of choking in young children, halve smaller fruits and vegetables like grapes and cherry tomatoes by cutting lengthways.

Not suitable: fruit tinned in syrup, dried fruit (eg raisins, sultanas) and processed fruit bars (eg fruit winders, fruit flakes etc). These are high in sugar and can cause tooth decay, so are not suitable as between-meal snacks.

Bread-based snacks

Children need more or less energy (calories) depending on their age and stage of development. Bread-based snacks can help to meet these extra energy needs and help your child feel more satisfied.

This includes white or wholemeal bread, rolls or baguettes, toast, plain bagels, wheaten, soda, potato or pitta bread, spread thinly with a little margarine, low-fat spread or butter; plain bread sticks, plain crackers or plain unsalted rice cakes; or a small sandwich with a sugar-free filling such as tomato, tuna, chicken, cheese etc.

Not suitable: Sugary spreads, including jam, honey, marmalade or chocolate spread as these are harmful to teeth. Peanut butter is high in fat and salt so is not recommended.

No cereal bars, or sweetened breads and pastries, eg pancakes, scones (plain and fruit), fruit bread, malt loaf, brioche, croissants and Danish pastries as these contain a lot of sugar and/or fat and salt.



The Department of Education and the Department of Health encourage all schools to provide healthier food and drinks throughout the day.

This healthy breaks for schools resource provides guidance on suitable snacks and drinks for children to have during their morning break, whether provided by the school or brought from home.

Why is a healthy break important?

- Childhood is an important time to establish good eating and drinking habits for future health.
- School healthy eating schemes give pupils the knowledge and opportunity to make healthier choices.
- Teachers have suggested that a healthy snack at break time can help with pupils' concentration and behaviour in the classroom.
- It encourages suitable drinks and snacks to help prevent tooth decay.
- It helps to meet our target of five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

If a child requires a special diet that will not allow the guidance to be met exactly, please discuss with your school.

Want to find out more?

School Food: the essential guide
www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/school-food-essential-guide-and-irish-translation

Enjoy healthy eating
www.enjoyhealthyeating.info

5 a day – Live well – NHS choices
www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday/pages/5adayhome.aspx

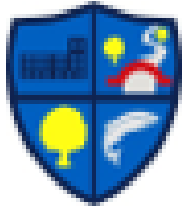


Public Health Agency
12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS.
Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).
www.publichealth.hscni.net

Find us on:



41/00



Coagh Primary School



“A recipe for a happy lunch”

- Wait quietly and sensibly in line.
- Always walk in the dinner hall.
- Be polite to all the adults helping you.
- Remember your table manners.
- Speak calmly, nicely and quietly at your table.
- Sit sensibly in your seat.