Healthy Eating Policy

School Address*: Our Lady of Good Counsel School,*

Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork. P31FH22

Phone number: *0214878370*

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School Patron: *The Bishop of Cork and Ross, Bishop Fintan Gavin*.

Principal: *Aisling Power*.

Deputy Principal: *Nollaig Moynihan.*

Chairperson: *Billy Murphy*

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Healthy Eating Policy

School: Our Lady of Good Counsel School, Ballincollig, Co. Cork
Policy Title: Healthy Eating Policy
Policy Review Date: November 2026
Next Review Date: November 2029

1. Policy Statement

Our Lady of Good Counsel School is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all pupils. Healthy eating plays an important role in supporting physical growth, learning, concentration, emotional wellbeing and lifelong healthy habits.

The school encourages pupils, staff and families to work together to promote positive attitudes towards healthy eating and active lifestyles.

2. Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To encourage pupils to make healthy food choices.
- To promote understanding of good nutrition.

- To support healthy eating habits that can continue throughout life.
- To encourage independence in food selection and preparation, where appropriate.
- To promote food hygiene and safe food handling practices.
- To develop consistent hand-washing routines.
- To encourage regular physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.
- To support the wellbeing of all pupils through a whole-school approach to health promotion

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2. School Meals Programme (Hot School Lunches)

Our Lady of Good Counsel School participates in the **Department of Education School Meals Programme**, through which eligible pupils receive a hot school lunch each day.

The school recognises that access to a nutritious hot meal supports pupils' health, wellbeing, concentration, learning and participation in school life. The hot lunch service complements the aims of this Healthy Eating Policy by providing balanced meal options that align, as far as possible, with healthy eating guidelines.

The School's Approach

- Hot lunches are provided by the school's approved School Meals Programme supplier.
- Menus are designed to offer a variety of nutritious foods, including protein, carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables.
- Water remains the preferred drink during the school day.
- The school encourages pupils to try a range of healthy foods and to develop positive attitudes towards nutritious eating.
- Staff support pupils, where necessary, to access and enjoy their meals in a safe and positive environment.

Dietary Requirements and Allergies

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils' medical, dietary, cultural and religious requirements are respected.

- Parents/guardians must inform the school of any allergies, food intolerances or special dietary requirements.
- The school will work with parents/guardians and the lunch provider to facilitate dietary needs wherever possible.

- Staff will follow individual care plans and risk assessments relating to food allergies and medical conditions.

Food Waste and Sustainability

The school encourages pupils to:

- Take only the food they are likely to eat where choices are available.
- Dispose of food waste responsibly.
- Develop an awareness of environmental sustainability and the importance of reducing food waste.

Supporting Independence

In line with pupils' individual abilities and educational goals, staff will encourage and support pupils to:

- Make choices from available menu options.
- Develop independence during mealtimes.
- Practise appropriate table manners and social skills.
- Participate in food-related learning activities where appropriate.

The provision of hot school lunches does not remove the importance of healthy eating at home. Parents/guardians continue to play a vital role in supporting healthy food choices and positive eating habits outside of school.

3. Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays and special occasions are important events in school life.

- Parents may send in a treat for a birthday where agreed with the class teacher.
- Teachers may organise occasional treats for events such as Christmas, Halloween, end-of-term celebrations or other special occasions.
- Consideration will be given to pupils with allergies, dietary requirements and medical needs.

4. Food Safety

For health and safety reasons:

- Pupils should bring food that is ready to eat where possible.
- Food requiring heating should generally not be sent to school.
- Exceptions may be made where agreed between parents/guardians and the school to meet an individual pupil's needs.

- All food allergies and medical dietary requirements must be communicated to the school.

5. Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene is an essential part of healthy eating and disease prevention.

Staff will support pupils according to their individual needs.

6. Health Promotion Activities

The school may support healthy eating through:

- Healthy Eating Week activities.
- Food Dudes and similar programmes.
- SPHE lessons.
- Science lessons.
- Practical cookery activities.
- School gardening projects where appropriate.
- Physical activity and wellbeing initiatives.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, Department of Education guidance, HSE advice or school circumstances.

Reviewed by the Board of Management on: 23 Sept 2026

Chairperson: Billy Murphy