**NDC PRESS RELEASE**

**For World School Milk Day.**

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., today highlighted the importance of the School Milk Scheme during World School Milk Day 2018 (26th September) in encouraging children to adopt healthy eating choices at a young age, by having one of their recommended servings from the 'milk, yogurt and cheese' food group, while at school.

Due to an increased subsidy from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, School Milk is now even more affordable for children. Children registered for the scheme by the end of September can also avail of two weeks free milk as part of an initiative to encourage more schools and children to register.

Minister Creed stated: “*I would encourage schools to register today for the School Milk Scheme so that your pupils can benefit from a very affordable product that will encourage children to adopt health eating choices at a young age”.*

The Department of Health’s Food Pyramid recommends three servings from the ‘milk, yogurt and cheese’ food group each day as part of a healthy, balanced diet. Between the ages of **9-18 years**, 5 servings per day are recommended due to the increased calcium requirements at this life stage.

Note to Editors

The objectives of the School Milk Scheme are to:

· Improve the nutritional properties of school children’s diets which dovetails with the nutritional programmes operated by other agencies.

· Promote the consumption of milk amongst school children to ensure that they might continue to drink milk in later years.

The School Milk Scheme is funded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and receives a financial contribution from the EU. It is managed by the National Dairy Council on behalf of the Department. It provides a carton of milk at a reduced cost to every child registered in participating schools - Montessori, National and Secondary, schools alike. As the milk is delivered by local dairies, participation also supports local jobs in the economy.

Since 2017, the School Milk Scheme has merged with the School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme This new Single School Scheme gives Ireland a real opportunity to deliver an improved and more effective national School Milk Scheme in terms of participation numbers and increased consumption levels

More information at: [www.moocrew.ie](http://www.moocrew.ie)

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