

St Mary's C.B.S. Enniscorthy



Healthy Eating Policy

The board of management set as one of its priorities for 2014/15 a review of the provision of food in the school. A subcommittee was set up, of board members and teachers to consider all options in relation to food provision with an overarching aim of promoting healthy eating in our school.

It has been decided that any ambition to promote healthy eating in the school requires a whole school approach. This will address all aspects of food consumption in the school, whether the food is directly provided by the school/community or brought in by pupils. It also connects food consumption to other issues such as physical exercise, the school curriculum, environmental awareness and home-school-community links. Education on food safety and hygiene, nutrition, waste disposal and composting, and reviewing our current canteen service will be the focus. Furthermore, part of this work involves the development of a healthy eating policy for the school.

In developing this policy we will involve parents, students, staff and board of management in a collaborative process. These guidelines will be reviewed every two years.

This draft policy statement on healthy eating which will be considered further by the whole school community of students, parents, staff and board of management in the 2015/16 school year.

School Mission Statement

The mission statement of St Mary's C.B.S. states that 'as a school community committed to the Edmund Rice Charter, We Care, We Prepare, and We Achieve'.

It is a natural progression that as a school with a caring ethos and committed to preparing its students for a successful future that we wish to promote a healthy lifestyle which includes promoting informed choices and decisions in regards to healthy eating.

Rationale

There is such a level of research now focusing on healthy eating and of the consequences to the health of the nation if we do not change existing practices that it is incumbent on our school to provide leadership in promoting healthy eating.

Food and nutrition are central to the physical and cognitive development of children and young people, which in turn contributes to educational success;

A positive experience of food in schools can filter through to children's homes and also shape their attitudes to food and consumption patterns in later life;

Aims and Objectives

1. To help develop positive attitudes in all those involved in our school community, students, staff and parents, to eating and healthy living.
2. To promote 'the personal development and well-being of the student and to provide a foundation for healthy living in all its aspects' (Social Personal Health Education (SPHE) Guidelines).
3. Provide guidelines to encourage healthy eating habits. This will help to increase awareness, to enable students to learn about different foods so that they make informed choices throughout their life.
4. To increase the funding available in the School Meals Programme. The School Meals Programme (SMP) is operated by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, Ireland (DSFA). It aims to supplement the nutritional intake of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to allow them to fulfil their potential within the educational system.
5. To provide excellent catering facilities for our students, staff and others, with healthy affordable food and drink options.

Whole School Actions

1. The school will adopt a whole school approach to healthy living which include healthy eating. This approach will be supported in all curricular areas but especially in Science, Civic, Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.), and S.P.H.E.
2. Our healthy eating guidelines will enable the students to develop and understand healthy living, and develop an ability to implement healthy behaviour and willingness to participate in activities that promote and sustain health. This also includes physical activity.
3. All the junior classes will be taught a module on healthy eating in their S.P.H.E. classes.
4. School staff will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthier eating.
5. The school will organise and hold a Healthy Eating Awareness week annually.
6. School rewards and treats will adhere to the Healthy Eating Guidelines.
7. The cookery classes in transition year and Leaving Certificate Applied will follow the Healthy Eating Guidelines.
8. Promotion of healthy foods and drink options in our canteen.
9. Increasing the service and range available to students via a breakfast club, meal deals, providing a minimum of two hot meals daily and an after school club, where snacks and drinks (provision of water in general purpose area) will be provided.

Healthy Eating Guidelines

Students are encouraged to eat healthy food in our school, and is guided by way of the food pyramid. Examples of foods and drinks we recommend and endeavour to provide include;

- Breakfast cereals (low in sugar content), poached, scrambled eggs, porridge
- Sandwiches-brown bread, bread rolls-wholemeal, (possible alternatives - wraps, Panini's, crackers and bagels)
- Fillings may include chicken, ham and fish option, salad, vegetables, cheese, eggs
- Soup
- Salads
- Fruit, including banana, apple, orange, peach, satsuma, plums, grapes, kiwi, pear, melon, pineapple
- Vegetables
- Milk, unsweetened smoothies, fruit juices, water
- Yoghurts, (low in sugar content)
- Popcorn
- Crackers
- Oat cakes
- Cheese portions
- Healthy Hot Meals
- No added sugar cereal bars

Students may choose to bring in their lunches from home or purchase within the school. **However, food purchased outside of the school or brought in from home must be in compliance with the above list.**

By making changes to portion size, in addition to changing the types of foods chosen, significant reductions of calories and dietary fat, reduction of salt intake can achieve positive wellbeing and general good health.

The foods we discourage are:

- Fats, oils and dressings, butter and margarine
- Table sugar and honey
- Sweets
- Cakes
- Biscuits
- Chocolate
- Sugar-sweetened fizzy drinks
- Savoury snacks, such as crisps

This draft policy will be reviewed and expanded during the course of the 2015/2016 school year.