



**St Kierans College
Secondary School**

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management of St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, understands that parents are first and foremost the primary educators of their children in relation to food choices. This policy is, therefore, designed to ensure that St Kieran's College can support the work of parents in relation to encouraging students to eat healthily. This policy was formulated in consultation with teachers, students and parents of St Kieran's College.

Mission & Ethos

St Kieran's College, as Ireland's oldest all-boys Catholic Secondary School, continues its founding aim of the pursuit of real excellence in education and formation, in the light of the Gospel, so as to allow all our students to realise the fullness of their potential. Academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally our students are encouraged to strive for all that is possible in the relentless pursuit of perfecting their individual gifts and talents. In so doing they bring to life the joy intended by our motto, "Hiems Transiit", for themselves, those they love and the community where they will live, serve and lead.

Sustainability

Promoting healthy eating goes hand in hand with encouraging sustainable food choices. We advocate for the consumption of locally sourced, seasonal produce and aim to reduce food waste through education and responsible planning. Our policy supports both personal health and environmental sustainability.

Rationale

Outlined below are the reasons why it is important to develop a Healthy Eating Policy in St Kieran's College:

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth and mental development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients necessary for daily activities. According to the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA, 2008), Irish teenagers are consuming foods high in fat, sugar and salt. These foods include carbonated drinks and confectionary and are often very low in iron, calcium and essential vitamins. Consequently the consumption of such 'junk food' is leading to an increase in health problems such as anaemia, osteoporosis and obesity.

In addition, 'The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Report' (HBSC 2010) report highlighted the fact that 16% of teenagers never eat a breakfast. Skipping breakfast and making poor food choices at lunch can have a serious effect on concentration levels which makes learning more difficult. Poor food choices in teenage years can develop into unhealthy food habits which, if continued into adulthood, may lead to diseases such as diabetes and coronary heart disease in later life.

For young people to achieve their full potential, a healthy diet is essential. It is within this context, the desire for students to achieve their full potential with a care for their overall

welfare, that the school is concerned with the eating habits of its students. Consultation with students, staff and parents highlighted their commitment and support for a teaching and learning environment where healthy eating is encouraged and healthy food is available on the school premises.

A student survey conducted in Spring 2017 further highlighted the need for healthier eating options. The Student Council discussed the need for more healthy eating options with school management and, following those discussions, the Student Council reviewed healthy eating choices in other schools. A Healthy Eating staff working group was also established to discuss and tackle the issue of healthy eating within the school. They decided to educate students by providing a healthy eating presentation followed by a survey of the students. The student survey proved that there is a very strong desire from the students for healthier food options to be offered in the school canteen.

Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to help all involved in our school, i.e. students, parents, and staff, to develop a positive attitude towards eating and an appreciation of the contribution that good food makes to our general, physical and mental wellbeing.

The policy will:

- Contribute to the nutritional knowledge of the students so as to help them develop the skills and confidence needed to make healthy food choices.
- Actively encourage all members of the school community to avail of the healthier alternatives available to them.
- Foster positive attitudes towards food with a view to improving concentration, learning and physical energy levels.
- Include all members of the school community in the development and promotion of this policy.

Action Plan

- The promotion of healthy eating in St Kieran's College will be addressed through the following subjects: Home Economics, Geography, Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education (PE), as well as through social and cultural activities or any other aspects of our Wellbeing plan such as the form class. The updated student journal will also contain a section on healthy eating as part of our efforts to promote health and wellbeing in the school.
- Form class time will be used at times to reinforce the message of positive food choices on students' physical and mental well-being.

- Increased awareness of healthy eating will be achieved through the use of posters and displays throughout the school.
- A Get Healthy Week will be held each year to increase knowledge, promote awareness and generate interest in healthy eating.
- Engagement with the Student Council will take place on an ongoing basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.
- Positive engagement with the Students regarding energy drinks.
- The food sold in the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is conducive to healthy lunch decisions. Foods such as crisps, fizzy drinks (including isotonic and energy drinks), sweets, chips, pizza, popcorn and chocolate bars will not be sold in the school canteen.
- Parents will be made aware of relevant healthy eating information in the school through the Parents' Council.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years. It will take into account any legislative changes, new policy and strategy documents either in the school or from the Department of Education and Skills, changes in school facilities and feedback from parents, students and staff. The review will be carried out by the Healthy Eating Committee comprising of representatives from the students, staff, and catering providers. Parents will be consulted through the Parents' Association.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be effective from the date of adoption by the Board of Management. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and particularly to comply with any relevant legislative changes.