

# **ST.KEVINS COLLEGE HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1.0 The Board of Management of St. Kevin's College accepts that parents or guardians are first and foremost the primary educators of their children in relation to food choices. This policy is designed to ensure that St. Kevin's College can support the good choices and work by parents in relation to encouraging students to eat healthy. This Policy was formulated by the Health Promotion Committee who is working with the HSE on establishing a healthier community in St.Kevins.

## **ETHOS**

2.0 This Healthy eating policy is guided and influenced by the ERST charter of St. Kevin's College.

2.1 St. Kevin's College encourages the development and growth of all students, we recognize that each student possesses their own individual choices and the ethos of the school reflects this individuality and aims to support and nurture their spiritual, intellectual, physical and mental growth.

2.2 This policy will further promote the holistic development of our students and is mindful of all participants. It is created where, cooperation, respect and understanding is encouraged between, staff, students, parents/guardians and the local community.

## **RATIONALE**

3.0 In a students lifetime there is a period of rapid physical growth and mental development where it is required that all students intake correct amount of energy and nutrients for necessary daily activities.

3.1 In today's society Irish teenagers are consuming foods high in fat, sugar and salt. These foods include carbonated drinks, confectionary, processed foods, which are very low in essential nutrients and high in sugar, fat and salt. The consumption of this food (junk food) is leading to an increase in future health problems, such as Type II diabetes, anemia, osteoporosis and obesity.

3.2 HBSC 2010 reported that 16% of teenagers never eat breakfast. Skipping breakfast and making poor food choices at break and lunch can have a serious effect on concentration levels, motivation and makes learning more difficult.

3.4 Poor food choices in early years can develop into unhealthy food habits, which may continue into adulthood and may lead to diseases in later life.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

4.0 This policy aims to help students, parents/guardians, and staff to develop a positive attitude towards eating habits, which contributes to our physical and mental health. The policy will aim to:

- Contribute to nutritional knowledge of the students and that in turn will help them develop the skills and confidence needed to make healthier choices.
- Actively encourage all members of the school community to make healthier choices.
- Introduce initiatives that give positive attitudes towards food with a view of improving concentration, learning and physical energy levels.
- Include all members of the school community in the development and promotion of this policy.

## **ACTION PLAN**

5.0 The Health Promotion Committee will address this topic through the following subjects, Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), Science, Physical Education, Wellbeing Nutrition & Lifestyle, as well as through social and cultural activities.

5.1 Cross-curricular links with subjects such as Business, Art, English, Mathematics, Transition Year, LCA and LCVP programmes will be used to promote healthy eating.

5.2 Form tutor time and pastoral care will be used where possible to reinforce the message of positive food choices on students 'Physical and mental well being'

5.3 Increased awareness of healthy eating will be achieved through the use of posters, displays and initiatives such as Healthy Living Week, Mental Health Week, and Sports day throughout the school

5.4 A Healthy Living Week and Mental Health week will be held each year to increase knowledge, promote awareness and generate an interest in Health and Wellbeing.

5.5 Visitors and guest speakers will be invited where possible to offer their expertise on physical and mental health

5.6 The food provided by the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it has healthy lunch choices. Highly processed foods and other items such as crisps, sweets, chocolate bars, oversized snacks, fizzy drinks (including energy and isotonic drinks) are not acceptable as part of the school diet. The school management asks that all parents follow these guidelines.

5.7 Students who are permitted to leave the premises for lunch must abide by the policy when entering the school grounds, these students act as positive role models and have a significant influence on pupils.

5.8 Due to serious nut allergies among the student population, parents/guardians are asked not to provide any food or snacks that may contain nuts.

5.9 Teachers are only to provide students with treats on occasions (awards, Christmas, Easter) and it must be kept to a minimum and discussed with the HPS committee prior to the event.

5.10 Fundraising events for charities or the school may also provide treats; variety and amount must be discussed with the HPS committee prior to the event.

5.11 Parents will be made aware of relevant healthy eating information in the school and in general via the school website, information nights, leaflets and through the Parents Council.

### **MONITORING**

6.0 This policy will be reviewed regularly. 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, feedback from parents, students and staff. The review will be carried out by the Health Promotion Committee, which comprises of students, staff, management and catering providers.