



**NORTH WICKLOW
EDUCATE TOGETHER
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Healthy Eating Policy

Introduction:

The Board of Management of North Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School (“the School”) accepts that parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) are first and foremost the primary educators of their children in relation to food choices. This policy is designed to ensure that the School can support the work of parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) in relation to encouraging students to eat healthily.

Rationale:

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 (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 and makes learning more difficult.

Poor food choices in teenage years can develop into unhealthy food habits, which may continue into adulthood and 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 i.e. the desire for students to achieve all they are capable of and a care for their overall welfare, that the school is concerned with the eating habits of its students.

Aims and Objectives:

This policy aims to help all involved in our school --- students, parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) and staff --- to develop a positive attitude towards eating and an appreciation of the contribution that good food makes to our physical and mental health.

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 the School will be addressed through the following subjects: Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education (PE), as well as through social and cultural activities.
- Cross-curricular links will also be used promote healthy eating.
- Tutor time and care team time will be used where possible 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.
- School initiatives will be held each year to increase knowledge, promote awareness and generate interest in healthy eating.
- Visitors and guest speakers such as the community dietician and health-promotion personnel will be invited where possible to offer their expertise on physical and mental health.
- Engagement with the Student Council take place on an ongoing basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) will be made aware of relevant healthy eating information in the school and in general via the school website, leaflets and through the Parents' Council.

Monitoring:

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 and feedback from parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s), students and staff.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in August 2016.

Signed: Jarlath Munnelly
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: Jonathan Browner
Principal

Date: August 5th 2016

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