

Coláiste Cholmcille

Healthy Eating Policy



2023-2024

Healthy Eating Policy

Mission Statement

Coláiste Cholmcille, Ballyshannon, is a community which respects the rights and self-worth of all, and aims to provide a happy and safe environment in which the individual may achieve her/his spiritual, academic and personal potential.

We also aim to encourage self-confidence and self-esteem in a happy atmosphere and structured environment.

Rationale

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth and mental development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients necessary for daily activities.

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 make 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.

Coláiste Cholmcille is committed to supporting a teaching and learning environment where healthy eating is encouraged. In 2019, Coláiste Cholmcille was awarded a certificate from the Health Promotion Team, HSE Donegal, for our participation in Health Promoting Schools and a plaque for our promotion of positive mental health and well-being in our school. Healthy eating is an integral part of this.

There is a significant link between nutrition and physical activity in increasing academic achievement.

The Department of Health keeps dietary recommendations under review as part of its role in promoting evidence based public health. As part of this review, in recent years the new *Healthy Food for Life – the Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid* have been developed by the Department working in partnership with other experts in nutrition in Ireland. Our practices in Colaiste Cholmcille reflect these changes & key messages in the review; see Appendix 1

Aims & Objectives

This policy aims to encourage the school community to develop a positive attitude towards healthy eating and an appreciation of the contribution that healthy food makes to our physical and mental health. The policy will aim to:

1. Promote the personal development and well-being of the student.
2. Develop positive attitudes to healthy eating and healthy living, a key skill in the new Junior Certificate programme.
3. Encourage healthy eating choices and habits of students using a whole school approach.
4. Support and encourage long-term healthy habits.
5. Impact positively on teaching and learning.
6. To support the key skills of staying well and being healthy and physically active as guided by the new Junior Cycle curriculum.

Objectives Short-term objectives

1. Ensure balanced nutritious meals are available at break times and lunch times.
2. Promote healthy food choices through poster campaigns and *Healthy Eating Week* activities.
3. Build awareness of the importance of both nutrition and physical activity in lessons.

Long-term objectives

1. Encourage all members of our school community to eat well and become more active.
2. Understand why this is important to their health and well-being.
3. Provide healthy nutritious food in our school.
4. Encourage healthy lifestyle habits.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES;

The Healthy Eating Policy is not provided exclusively by any one individual or group. It is a holistic process that benefits from the synergy of many working together with a shared vision towards a common. Coláiste Cholmcille acknowledges the role of parent(s) / guardian(s) as the primary educators of their children and all programmes and policies are developed to enhance and support this role with the ultimate aim of providing the best possible education for students. Parent(s) / guardian(s), for their part, can support the school in its day-to-day duty of care to its students by supporting the implementation of agreed and socially responsible policies in this and other areas.

A Whole School Approach thus ensures that our school maximises its resources through the identification of roles and responsibilities for school management and staff in the provision of appropriate education on healthy eating to students. The following people have a particular role with regards to healthy eating in our school:

All members of the school community;

- Model the school standards of healthy eating
- Organise events, themed weeks, demonstrations, speakers, projects, displays and lessons to highlight the Healthy Eating Policy to the whole school Parents/Guardians
- Encourage their son/daughter to make healthy choices
- Provide healthy lunch/snacks to their son/daughter
- Provide a healthy breakfast

Board of Management;

- Formally adopt and implement the Healthy Eating Policy
- Ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed
- Ensure the policy is highlighted and promoted on a school wide basis within the school, with particular attention being given to incoming pupils and their parents

School Leadership;

- Development of a Healthy Eating Policy
- Implementation of policy
- Monitoring & review of policy
- Exploit opportunities provided by the school curriculum to raise awareness for healthy eating
- Support and lead initiatives with staff members
- Consult with and seek assistance from external agencies (Health Service Executive (HSE) etc.) where necessary SPHE, Wellbeing, Home Economics, Science and other subject teachers
- Promote healthy eating as part of curriculum provision

School Canteen;

- Provide healthy, nutritious snacks and meals for students
- Offer a variety of dishes to encourage healthy eating

CURRENT WHOLE SCHOOL PROVISION & GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY EATING**Time allocation;**

At Junior Cycle level students are provided with 400 hours of Wellbeing across a range of subjects (CSPE, SPHE, PE) which provides opportunities to consider healthy eating practices and guidelines. The

topic of healthy eating may also be incorporated into Science and Home-Economics. Other subjects may present further learning opportunities based on the needs and interests of the students.

Healthy Eating in our canteen;

The school canteen provides healthy food to all of our students and staff. The food is supplied by a franchise company "Food Village" and a wide range of healthy lunches and snacks are available. As a DEIS school, an assortment of fresh sandwiches and fruit are available to all students at break and lunch time free of charge. Healthy hot meals and other snacks can be pre-booked and paid for from the menu at a limited cost. Students should ensure they have a balanced breakfast before the start of the school day to help them learn and concentrate better in school.

A vending machine supplying bottled water and two drinking-water fountain taps have been installed and are maintained.

Packed Lunch;

A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid. A copy of the food pyramid and healthy lunchbox guidelines are displayed around the school. Some of the healthy snacks recommended during morning break include fruit, standard yoghurt, homemade scones, wholemeal toast and cheese. Chewy / sticky bars / cereal bars and sweets are not advisable at any time.

Healthier choices of drinks include plain water and milk. Pure unsweetened juices or well-diluted sugar free squashes may be included but only as part of their main lunch meal, to reduce the risk of tooth decay. Other drinks such as sweetened fruit juices, fruit drinks, squashes, fizzy drinks (including diet drinks and sparkling water) should be avoided due to their sugar and / or acid content, as these are also harmful to teeth.

Cans, glasses, chewing gum, popcorn, peanuts and crisps are not available in school in order to actively discourage unhealthy snacks, and for safety and litter reasons. We encourage students and staff to be mindful of food allergies that others may have, for example a nut allergy, and make conscious decisions around our eating habits for the safety of others.

"Healthy Eating Awareness Days" will be held during the year as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.

Teachers and staff will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Coláiste Cholmcille

Signed:



Chairperson

Date 21/11/2023

Review Date 2025

Signed:



Principal

Date 21/11/2023

Appendix 1

Food pyramid;

What is the Food Pyramid?

