



FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody, Co. Wexford

*'Good food and
fitness is the way,
that's how we do it
in F.C.J.'*

*'Food for Thought?
Simple rule.
Give your body the
best of fuel.'*

Policy Title:

"Healthy Eating Policy Document for FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody"

Policy Statement:

The Board of Management accepts that parents are first and foremost the primary educators of and providers for their children in relation to food choices. Our Healthy Eating policy is designed to ensure that FCJ can support the work of parents in relation to encouraging our students to eat healthily. It was formulated in consultation with teachers, students and parents of FCJ. We aim to help all those in our school community in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food choices make to our health. We wish to improve the health of our students by educating them on how to establish and maintain healthy eating habits. The policy applies to all in our school throughout the school day and on all school activities.

Rationale :

For young people to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. Healthy eating provides the building blocks for lifelong health and well-being. Adolescence is a time of physical growth and development – the most rapid since infancy. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients. Eating a nourishing breakfast and a healthy school lunch allows our young people to take full advantage of the education provided for them. Evidence shows that healthy lifestyle behaviours can improve academic performance, concentration and behaviour. Such health benefits for young people are inextricably linked with their overall development. Recent research (Department of Health and Children) has highlighted disturbing trends, including an increase in teenage obesity and diabetes. Therefore, our policy is both timely and critical for our health.



Aims and Objectives:

This policy aims to help all involved in our school - students, parents, 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.

This policy will:

- Contribute to students' knowledge of nutrition in order 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.
- 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) through as many subjects as possible and extracurricular activities such as sport.

Action Plan:

We will:

- Provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating through a cross curricular approach within the classroom (Home Economics, SPHE, P.E, English, Art, Irish , French, Maths, Science).
- Raise awareness of our policy through Form Teacher presentations and on Instagram.
- Invite students and staff to complete a short questionnaire regarding our school canteen.
- Ensure that products in our canteen will be in keeping with our school's healthy eating objectives.
- Provide catering facilities and food choices for staff and students that are nutritionally balanced and affordable.
- Raise awareness of the sugar, salt and saturated fat content in foods through Form Teacher presentations.
- Display nutritional information in the canteen area.
- Apply healthy eating guidelines to items consumed or bought on all school trips and activities.
- Paint murals in each of the school's main buildings promoting healthy eating in our school.
- Invite speakers /nutritionists to speak to our students on healthy eating.



- Encourage and promote physical activity in conjunction with healthy eating.
- Inform student athletes about the basis of sports nutrition.
- Hold a “Healthy Eating Awareness Week” annually.
- Evaluate our Healthy Eating policy annually.

Appendices:

Two major surveys have recently been published: the Healthy Ireland Survey (2018) which looked at the lifestyle behaviours of individuals aged 15 years and over, and the Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC), which looked at the eating behaviour of children aged 9-18 years. [www.nuigalway.ie/hbcs/]

Appendix 1: Healthy Ireland Survey 2018:

The key diet and nutrition messages from the Healthy Ireland Survey 2018 are summarised below.

- Only one in four (26%) report that they eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables daily.
- Just over one in five (22%) report that they do not eat fruit or vegetables every day.
- Almost two in every three (65%) report that they consume snack foods or sugar sweetened drinks daily.
- Almost two in every three (62%) eat snack foods daily, consuming an average of two portions per day.
- About one in every seven (15%) drink sugar- sweetened drinks daily, with men aged 15–24 years most likely to drink these (29%).
- Three out of every four (73%) eat breakfast every day, with those living in more deprived areas less likely to do so.
- Younger people are less likely to eat breakfast – four out of every ten (40%) of 15–24 year olds do not eat breakfast every day.



Appendix 2: Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Ireland:

The key diet and nutrition messages from Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children Ireland (Kelly et al, 2012) are summarised below.

- One in every four eat fruit (24%) and vegetables (23%) daily.
- Consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks is still high, with 26% and 12% having sweets and soft drinks daily or more.
- There was no change in the proportion of children who reported never eating breakfast on weekdays (13%).
- One in every five children (21%) reported going to school or to bed hungry; this has remained stable since 2010.

These surveys show that there is still considerable room for improvement.

