



Scoil Dara

Kilcock Co. Kildare



SCOIL DARA HEALTHY-EATING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 The Board of Management of Scoil Dara, Kilcock, Co. Kildare accepts that parents are first and foremost the primary educators of their children in relation to food choices. This policy is designed to ensure that Scoil Dara supports the work of parents in encouraging students to eat healthily. This policy was formulated in consultation with teachers, students and parents of Scoil Dara.

2. MISSION STATEMENT AND ETHOS.

2.1 This healthy eating policy is influenced and guided by the mission statement and ethos of Scoil Dara.

2.2 Scoil Dara's Mission Statement encourages the development and growth of students in a holistic way to ensure dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. We aim to support and nurture their spiritual, intellectual and physical growth. Our school is also committed to educating students as people of integrity and responsibility.

2.3 This policy will serve to further promote the holistic development of our students and is mindful of all stakeholders. It is created in a climate where cooperation, respect and understanding is encouraged between staff, students, parents and all those associated with the school.

3. RATIONALE.

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

3.2 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 anemia, osteoporosis and obesity.

3.3 In addition 'The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children (HBSC 2010)' report highlights 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.

3.4 Poor food choices in teenage years can develop into unhealthy food habits which may continue into adulthood and could lead to diseases such as diabetes, coronary heart disease and poor dental health in later life.

3.5 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 educating students about their eating habits.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 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. 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.

5. ACTION PLAN

5.1 The promotion of healthy eating in Scoil Dara will be addressed through the following subjects: Home Economics, Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education (PE), as well as through social and cultural activities.

5.2 Cross-curricular links with subjects such as Business, Art and English as well as the Transition Year and LCA programmes will be used promote healthy eating.

5.3 Increased awareness of healthy eating will be achieved through the use of posters and displays throughout the school.

5.4 A *'Get Healthy Week'* will be held annually to increase knowledge, promote awareness and generate interest in healthy eating.

5.5 Visitors and guest speakers such as the Community Dietician and health-promotion personnel will be invited where possible to offer their expertise on the impact of diet on physical and mental health.

5.6 Engagement with the Student Council will take place on an on-going basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.

5.7 The school supports healthy eating practice through the promotion of healthy eating. All students are encouraged to bring a healthy packed lunch from home. The food sold in the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is conducive to healthy lunch decisions and in-line with school policy. Foods such as crisps, fizzy drinks (including isotonic and energy drinks), sweets, chips, pizza, sausage rolls and chocolate bars will not be sold in the school canteen.

5.8 Parents will be made aware of relevant healthy eating information in the school and in general via the school website, newsletter and through the Parents' Council.

6. MONITORING

6.1 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 parents, students and staff. The review will be carried out by the *Healthy Eating Committee* comprising of representatives from the students, staff, and service providers. Parental views will be acquired through the Parents' Council.

7. RATIFICATION

7.1 This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Dara on 26th May 2016 and will be reviewed one year from the date of ratification.

Signed: Mr. Pádraig Byrne
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 26th May 2016

REFERENCE LIST:

Department of Education and Skills Circular 0051/2015

HBSC report 2010

www.healthpromotion.ie/health/schools

Guidelines for Developing a HEALTHY EATING POLICY in Post-Primary Schools (Dept of Health & Children)

Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA, 2008)