

# CARRIGTWOHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

HEALTHY EATING POLICY  
REVIEWED AND RATIFIED 31 MARCH 2022



## **Introduction**

Food and drink are an essential part of our daily lives. They play a fundamental role in the development of the human being. Making the right choices to support our nutrition requirements satisfies our physiological needs, and also contributes to our mental and emotional development. What we eat and drink is directly related to our state of health. Adolescence is a time for developing the skills to make informed choices and decisions throughout life. What we eat and drink is one such choice. Young people need to be aware of the importance of good nutrition for health in order to optimise their growth, health and developmental potential through their teenage years and beyond. By developing a Healthy Eating Policy that reflects and represents the whole-school community, Carrigtwohill Community College hopes to contribute to this. While health eating has always been strongly encouraged in Carrigtwohill Community College, we feel that by developing a policy, the eating choices and habits of young people could be further improved.

### **School Ethos**

By working to promote the health of students, we are contributing toward the provision of a healthy learning environment. The various issues of health form part of an expansive curriculum which caters for the diverse needs of the school community.

### **Code of Behaviour**

In keeping with the Code of Behaviour at Carrigtwohill Community College "*Respect for Self, Others and Property*" the healthy eating policy serves to further promote this point.

## **Rationale**

For young people to achieve their full potential, it is essential that they eat healthily. As well, 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 children to take full advantage of the education provided for them.

The Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC, 2006) report showed that many adolescents have poor eating habits. Skipping breakfast and/or lunch is a habit reported by up to 17% of students, while many do not eat good food or drink enough fluid. This practice can impact concentration levels and make learning more difficult. Research has also shown that the foods eaten at lunchtime can affect behaviour in the classroom during the afternoon; consuming food and drink that are high in fats and sugars, especially fizzy drinks, may cause over-activity, resulting in difficult classroom management.

Obesity – The Policy Challenges: The Report of the National Task Force on Obesity (2005) highlighted the worrying increase in childhood obesity across Europe. Figures suggest that the number of overweight children in Ireland has trebled over the past decade and may be rising at a rate of 10,000 per year. Foods associated with this increase in obesity include energy-dense, micronutrient-poor foods such as packaged sweet and savoury snacks and sugar-sweetened soft drinks. The report makes recommendations for the education sector. Two key recommendations provide a strong basis for:

- *Nutrition and physical activity levels of school children should be seen as part of the duty of care of each school, for example in relation to catering for school meals, policy on vending machines, and provision of fresh drinking water.*
- *All post-primary schools should be encouraged to engage with their student councils and parents' associations in promoting the concept of 'healthy eating and active living'.*

Young people spend a large part of the day in school where they eat at least one of their main meals. The home plays the major role in determining healthy eating habits. However, the school, in partnership with parents, can make an important contribution. It is recommended that a whole-school approach be taken in developing a Healthy Eating Policy. This creates a strong sense of ownership among students, staff and parents and a commitment to sustain the improvements.

## ***Aims***

- To encourage the nutritional and overall well-being of all pupils in the school
- To heighten an awareness of the importance of a balanced diet
- To encourage pupils to make wise choices about food and nutrition
- To recognise the dietary needs of all pupils and aim to ensure that all pupils' individual and cultural needs are met
- To support pupils to develop life-long healthy eating practises and a positive approach towards food
- To raise levels of concentration within class due to consumption of healthy food
- To monitor and review the schools practise and policy and, if necessary, make amendments

## ***Implementation***

In implementing this policy, a variety of areas of school life will be addressed:

### **Whole-school context**

Carrigtwohill Community College provides a physical and social environment that encourages healthy eating. It ensures that lessons learned in the classroom are transferred into school life and that healthy-eating messages are consistent throughout the school.

### **Subject Areas**

The subject of healthy eating is addressed to varying degrees in many subject areas that offer a unique opportunity for teachers to influence young people in this regard. Home Economics, Physical Education (PE), Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE) and Science are examples of subjects that address aspects of diet, nutrition, physical activity and health in Carrigtwohill Community College.

#### *Home Economics*

Within the Home Economics curriculum, there are many opportunities to promote awareness for food health. The Junior Cycle curriculum contains an entire strand dedicated to Food, Health and Culinary Skills. Under this strand, the students learn about healthy living, healthy eating, nutrition, digestion, balanced eating and special diets. This cumulative core area will be covered from first year through second year and third year. The practical focus is to develop the application of knowledge to culinary skills (50% of Junior Cycle mark).

In Transition Year, students get the opportunity to take part in the "Healthy Food Made Easy" programme from the Health Service Executive (HSE). Healthy Food Made Easy is a 6-week course; 2- 2 ½ hour sessions per week. It aims to:

- Encourage healthy eating,
- Improve our knowledge of nutrition when preparing our meals at home,
- Learn healthy meals on a budget

The course outline includes building a food pyramid, the fibre providers, focus on fats, food for life, shop smart and the road ahead. There is an opportunity for all participants to prepare, cook and eat healthy food in Sessions 2-6.

The Leaving Certificate curriculum continues to build an in-depth knowledge of nutrition and the application of this to meal and dietary planning. This allows the student to have the opportunity to investigate food labels and look out for hidden salt, sugar and fat in food.

#### *Physical Education (PE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) & Wellbeing*

While the promotion of healthy living is ever present in the PE class, the curricular area of Health-Related Activity specifically, provides opportunities for discussion on healthy eating and how food and exercise choices can affect the composition of the body. Body composition is an important component of health-related fitness. As part of this

module in PE, a guest speaker (personal trainer) is invited to the school to discuss lifestyle choices including healthy eating. All students bring a bottle of water to all PE classes to hydrate during activities.

In the SPHE Short Course strand, Minding Myself and Others, students evaluate how diet, physical activity, sleep/rest and hygiene contribute to self-confidence, self-esteem and wellbeing. The new Health Eating resource pack (PEAI) is used according to the guidelines within SPHE classes to educate students further on healthy eating. In the daily 12-minute wellbeing assemblies, a full week is dedicated to discussions on healthy eating – this occurs at the same time for all year groups, highlighting its importance.

### *Science*

Within the new Junior Cycle Science learning outcomes, students evaluate how human health is affected by nutrition and lifestyle choices – much work is done in relation to the nutrients, the food pyramid and food labelling.

## **Promote and Market Healthy Eating**

### *The Cookery Club*

Hosting a healthy eating event is an ideal opportunity to provide a variety of healthy eating activities for students. The Cookery Club after school is the opportune time for students to avail of healthy eating knowledge and skills. This weekly club takes place after school for 1 hour and 20 minutes. All students, including those who do not choose home economics as a subject, are welcome to join, based on capacity.

The students who participate in the cookery club gain a knowledge of healthy eating and the skills to implement it with the view of promoting healthy decisions. There is specific emphasis on healthy lunches and after school snacks, e.g. mini homemade pizzas.

The Cookery Club is designed to work in line with the Healthy Eating Policy to allow students the opportunity to learn healthy eating and culinary skills in a relaxed environment, therefore promoting healthy eating decisions.

### *Other*

- Awareness of healthy eating has increased using posters and displays created by the students themselves.
- A 'Health Eating Corner' forms part of the school newsletter and website.
- The use of sweets, chocolate or other treats as a reward system for students is discouraged.

## **Social Areas and Lunches**

- Microwaves, kettles and toasters are available in all social areas to allow for warm food and drinks to be consumed, where possible.
- Students are encouraged to bring healthy and nutritious food in their packed lunches.
- Fizzy drinks, energy drinks, high caffeine drinks, juices and dilutes are not permitted within the school. Students must bring water only to school.
- Chocolate spread, cheese dips, chewy bars, sweets, chewing gum, nuts, popcorn, and crisps are not permitted.
- Instant noodles and other high salt processed foods are not permitted.
- Guidelines relating to safe and hygienic use of appliances will be displayed in the social areas.

## **Support and Advice for Parents**

Parents are provided with relevant information on ways they can encourage their children to make good choices through this policy. They may be given guidelines on items that would constitute a healthy lunch that will meet their child's nutritional needs.


### *Healthy Eating Guidelines*

- Parents should ensure that their child has a balanced breakfast to help them learn and concentrate better in school.
- A healthy lunch includes a helping of food from the bottom 4 shelves of the food pyramid.
- Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage include fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yogurts (non-dessert), rice cakes, crackers and small scones.

- Students are encouraged to bring water to school and drink water at break time and lunchtime. If students do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
- Juices and squash, fizzy drinks, sports/energy drinks are not permitted.
- Chocolate spread, cheese dips, chewy bars, sweets, chewing gum, nuts, popcorn, crisps are not permitted.
- Hot food purchased from outlets such as delicatessens, garages etc. are not recommended due to their high salt and fat content.
- Instant noodles and other high salt processed foods are not permitted.
- Students are encouraged to bring a packed lunch on school trips. Where this is not possible, every effort is made to bring the students to an establishment which offers a broad range of healthy options.
- Every effort is made to ensure that school-related events will adhere to the school's healthy eating policy.
- Nutrition and healthy eating is included as part of the school curriculum.
- 'Healthy Eating Awareness' events are held as an incentive to encourage healthy eating in school and at home.
- The 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' are reviewed every two years.

### ***Communication of this Policy***

A copy of this policy will be provided upon request from the secretary's office.

Signed:   
(Chairperson of Board of Management).

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 31 March 2022

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 31 March 2022

Date of next review: March 2024