

# St Augustine's College, Abbeyside, Dungarvan



## Healthy Eating Policy

### Mission Statement.

*St Augustine's College is a caring community, committed to offering all of its students and staff a happy and safe environment in which they can work, learn, pray and play. We endeavor to facilitate the academic, personal, moral, spiritual and social development of each member of our school community. Our aim is to provide a balanced and well-rounded education for all our students.*

## 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.

The Board of Management of St. Augustine's College 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 St. Augustine's College can support the work of parents in relation to encouraging students to eat healthily. This policy was formulated in consultation with teachers, students and parents of St. Augustine's College. This policy will serve to further promote the 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.

## 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 has shown 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. All this can lessen their 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 action by schools:

*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.

Healthy Eating Committee – St Augustine's College.

Staff Representatives: Ms. Dara McCloskey, Ms. Angela Walsh, Ms. Margo McGann ,  
Ms. Lisa Hanrick, Mr. Jason Forrestal.

Parent Council Representatives: TBC

Canteen Representative: Mrs. Babs Kiely.

In developing a Healthy Eating Policy, St Augustine's College address two key action areas:

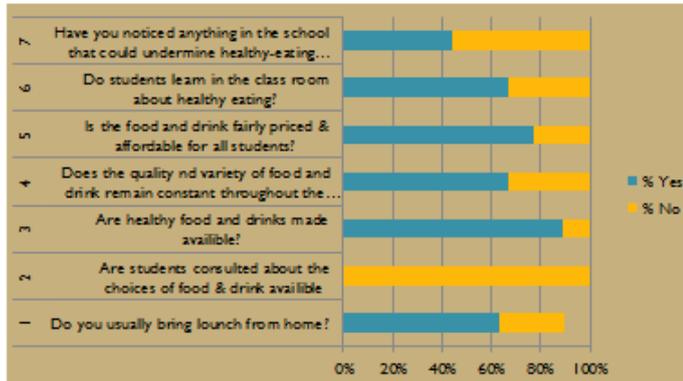
a) the whole-school context

(b) teaching and learning.

A survey of students, parents and staff carried out in the school year 2015-2016 highlighted their commitment and support for a teaching and learning environment where healthy eating is encouraged and healthy food is available on the school premises.

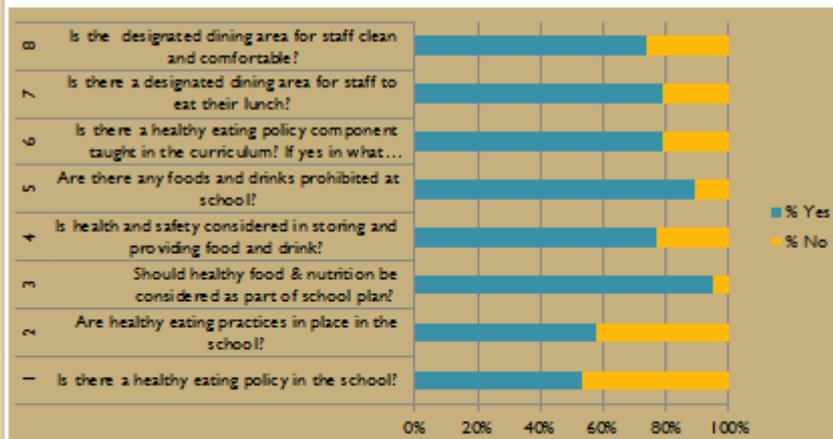
## Students

Results of Dept. survey for students



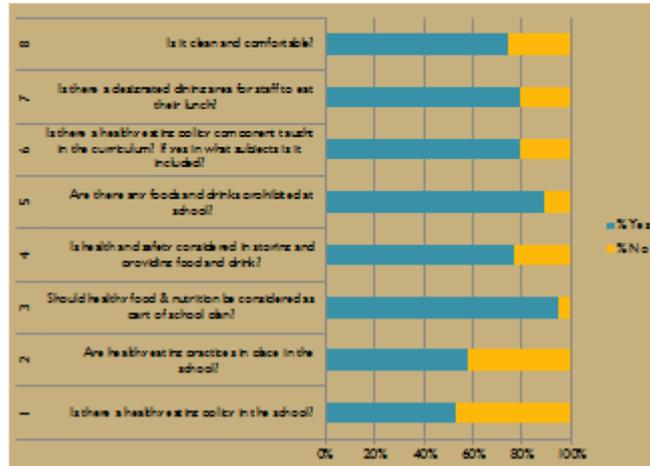
## Parents

Results of Dept. survey for students



## Staff

### Results of Dept. survey for students



### ACTION PLAN

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

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

Tutor time and pastoral care 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.

A Get Healthy Week 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 will take place on an on-going basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.

The food sold in the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is conducive to healthy lunch decisions. Fizzy drinks (including isotonic and energy drinks), will not be sold in the school canteen. Bottled water is available instead. Fresh fruit is available daily. Both brown and white rolls are available with homemade soup. A selection of freshly prepared salads, paninis and toasted sandwiches are available on request, and can be pre-ordered. All treats are kept to the rear of the serving area and the selection will be reduced on a phased basis.

Parents 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.

#### **Objectives (Short Term):**

- To frequently remind students of the Importance of Healthy Eating through poster displays, and information leaflets.
- To focus on Healthy Eating Issues, and to highlight these by organising a "Health-Week" each school year.
- To regularly assess the sale of snack foods in the school canteen and to try out different healthy food options with the student population.
- To generate interest and to encourage students to further their knowledge of Healthy Eating by organising frequent competitions related to the issue.

#### **Objectives (Long Term):**

- To improve on the Canteen facilities for the students in St. Augustine's with particular emphasis on the seating area in the Canteen at lunchtime.
- To provide more variety and choice in the range of Healthy Food options available in the school Canteen and Vending Machines.
- To liaise with local shops, supermarkets and garages with a view to promoting more healthy lunch options and providing possible Healthy "Meal Deals" for the students.
- To assess the range of snack foods and drinks on sale and to increase the range of Healthy options within these.
- To improve on the food preparation/storage area for staff within the staff room, particularly in terms of layout and facilities available

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

### **RATIFICATION**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St Augustine's College on 20th March 2018 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.