



Coláiste Mhuire, Askeaton

Physical Health Policy

June 2017

School Ethos

In Coláiste Mhuire we strive to provide a learning environment that promotes the educational, emotional, physical, psychological and moral welfare of each student while encouraging the co-operation and assistance of parents/guardians/guardians of the student. This policy is influenced by the school ethos and mission.

Rationale

A health-promoting school is one in which all members of the school community work together to provide students with integrated and positive experiences and structures which promote and protect their health (WHO, 1997). Health Education is not only about delivering information but also developing the skills and confidence to make healthy choices. Schools can provide a physical and social environment that encourages healthy eating and physical activity. It can ensure that lessons learnt inside and outside the classroom are transferred into school life and that messages regarding healthy-eating and physical activity are consistent throughout the school.

The *Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children* survey (HBSC, 2016) has shown that poor eating habits are a feature of many children's lifestyles. The National Task Force on Obesity (2005) has highlighted the increase in childhood obesity across Europe. Figures suggest that the number of overweight children in Ireland may be rising at a rate of 10,000 per year. Poor eating habits, skipping meals i.e. breakfast and consumption of food and drink high in fats and sugars are contributing to these alarming figures.

Adolescence is a time of rapid growth and mental development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients necessary for daily activities. 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 once such choice. Research suggests that nutritional intake at lunchtime can greatly affect behaviour in the classroom during the afternoon. Consuming foods high in sugar and fat can result in hyperactivity, resulting in poor learning performance and difficult classroom management. Young people need to be aware of the importance of good nutrition for health and encouraged to adopt healthy eating habits in order to optimise their growth, health and developmental potential through their teenage years and beyond.

The relationship between lack of physical activity and obesity has become a particularly important issue in recent years because of concerns about the rapidly rising incidence of obesity among children and adults (*National Task Force on Obesity*, 2005). Participation in regular physical activity is associated with improved cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health, better mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as prevention of such chronic

diseases as obesity, hypertension and type-2 diabetes. In addition to its benefits for health, sport/physical activity also makes an important contribution to the physical, personal, social and emotional development of the individual, a fact that underpins the place for structured physical activity in our schools (*Department of Education and Science, 2003*). There also is substantial evidence showing that young people who are physically fit and active tend to perform better in the classroom. Because most young people are in education, schools are well placed to increase young people's physical activity levels.

Healthy Eating

Aims

The healthy eating policy aims to achieve the following:

- To promote healthier informed choices regarding food and nutrition among the whole school community
- To actively encourage all members of the school community to avail of the healthier alternatives available to them
- To foster positive attitudes towards healthy food choices with a view to improving concentration, learning and energy levels
- To include all members of the school community in the development and promotion of this policy

Action Plan

- The promotion of healthy eating in Coláiste Mhuire will be addressed through the following subjects: Home Economics, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE) and Science.
- Cross-curricular links with other subjects such as Art, English, Business as well as the Transition Year programme will be utilised in the promotion of healthy eating.
- The School Food Company will provide healthy and nutritious food and drink options for both staff and students on a daily basis.
- Foods consumed within the school building will be monitored and reviewed to ensure they are conducive to our healthy eating policy. Consumption of fizzy drinks, energy drinks, crisps, chocolate will not be permitted.
- Increased awareness of healthy eating will be achieved through the use of posters and displays throughout the school.
- Nutritional guidelines and tips will be included in the student's homework journal.
- Visitors and guest speakers from the Local Sports Partnership will be invited to speak to students to offer their expertise on health and nutrition.
- Parents/guardians will be made aware of relevant healthy eating information in the school via the school website, information leaflets and through the Parents Association.
- Parents/guardians will be expected to support students in the provision of healthy lunches and snacks.

- Nutritional seminars will be offered to all exam students and their parents/guardians to further develop and promote healthy eating and exam success.
- Participation in National Youth Projects such as Young Social Innovators, Sci-fest, Young Scientist and PE Expo.

Physical Activity

Aims

The physical activity policy aims to achieve the following

- To increase physical activity participation by creating an inclusive and supportive environment and by offering a broad range of physically active opportunities to appeal to the whole school community.
- To ensure that a wide range of activities and extra-curricular clubs are available for all year groups and abilities in both a competitive and non-competitive context.
- To develop in our whole school community an understanding of the importance of being physically active on a regular basis and how this contributes towards a healthy lifestyle.
- To provide high quality physical activity and sporting experiences to encourage lifelong commitment to physical activity and sport.

Action Plan

- The promotion of physical activity in Coláiste Mhuire will be addressed through the following subjects: Home Economics, Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Physical Education (PE) and Science.
- Cross-curricular links with other subjects such as Art, Geography, Maths, ICT, History and English, as well as the Transition Year programme will be utilised in the promotion of physical activity.
- Increased awareness of physical activity will be achieved through the use of posters and displays throughout the school building.
- Physical activity guidelines and tips will be included in the student's homework journal.
- Visitors and guest speakers from the Local Sports Partnership will be invited to speak to students to offer their expertise on health and physical activity.
- Parents/guardians will be made aware of relevant physical activity information in the school via the school website, information leaflets and through the Parents Association.
- Participation in National Youth Projects such as Young Social Innovators, Sci-fest, Young Scientist, and PE Expo.
- Participation in physical activity programmes including Sky Sports for Living, Aviva Fitness Challenge, World Marathon Challenge, Drop Everything and Move, Limericks Fittest School and The European Week of Sport.
- Provision of a well-balanced and diverse physical education programme in line with current guidelines.

- Development of a sports and physical activity directory by the Coláiste Mhuire Sports Council. This will be displayed on the Sports Council notice board and made available to all students and staff.
- Development of School – Community – Club links to enhance the provision of both sporting and physical education experiences within Coláiste Mhuire.
- Provision of a vast number of sporting teams and activities to cater for the needs and interests of both male and female students.
- Provision of opportunities to participate in non-competitive physical activities e.g C25K

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Procedures

The policy will be reviewed regularly. It will take into account any policy or strategy document amendments either within Coláiste Mhuire or from the Department of Education and Skills, changes in school facilities and feedback from students, staff and parents/guardians.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14/06/17

Signed: M. Aards

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: P. Guerin

Principal