



DOMINICAN COLLEGE

Taylor's Hill

HEALTHY-EATING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Board of Management of Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, Galway, 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 Dominican 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 Dominican College.

2. MISSION STATEMENT AND ETHOS

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

2.2 Dominican College encourages the development and growth of each individual in the constant search for TRUTH. We recognise that each student possesses their own individual character and the ethos of the school reflects this individuality and aims 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. It 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 anaemia, osteoporosis and obesity.

3.3 In addition *The Health Behaviour in School Aged Children* (HBSC 2010) report highlighted 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 makes learning more difficult.

3.4 Poor food choices in teenage years can develop into unhealthy food habits which may continue into adulthood and may lead to diseases such as diabetes and coronary heart disease 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 the eating habits of its students. A survey of students, parents and staff carried out in the school year 2013-2014 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.

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 Dominican 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.

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

5.3 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.

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

5.5 A *Get Healthy Week* will be held each year to increase knowledge, promote awareness and generate interest in healthy eating.

5.6 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.

5.7 Engagement with the Student Council take place on an ongoing basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.

5.8 The food sold in the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure it is conducive to healthy lunch decisions. Foods such as crisps, fizzy drinks (including

isotonic and energy drinks), sweets, chips, pizza, popcorn and chocolate bars will not be sold in the school canteen.

5.9 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.

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 catering providers. Parental views will be acquired through the Parents' Council.

7. RATIFICATION

7.1 This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Dominican College on 2nd February 2015 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.