



Healthy Eating Policy for Enniscorthy Community College: Ratified by Board of Management on Tuesday 18th of November 2025

Introduction:

This Healthy Eating Policy has been developed in partnership with all members of the school community. It recognises that healthy eating as an integral part of student wellbeing. It also recognises that wellbeing and successful learning are inextricably linked.

Rationale:

“A healthy diet is a foundation for health, well-being, optimal growth and development. It protects against all forms of malnutrition”. (World Health Organisation, online 2023). A healthy diet serves as a protective factor against many forms of chronic disease as well as obesity in adults and children.

The following documents/resources have influenced the development of this policy:

- Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023. Department of Education and Skills.
- HSE Healthy Eating Guidelines online 2023.
- HSE Healthy Eating Policy Toolkit for Second Level Schools online 2023.
- Healthy Ireland Nutritional Standards for School Meals. Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and Department of Education and Skills Updated 2020.
- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles in Post Primary Schools. Department of Education Circular 051/2015.

Enniscorthy Community College is concerned about the consequences of unhealthy eating:

Avoiding breakfast can affect a young person’s performance in school.

Hungry young people are most likely to have behavioural, emotional and academic problems throughout school.

Overweight and obesity is a result of poor eating habits.

Overweight children are more likely to get bullied more than other groups within the school environment.

Eating disorders are on a rapid increase among young people today.

Young girls, especially, are constantly dieting and concerned about their weight. This has a knock-on effect on their body due to the loss of essential minerals and vitamins, brain functioning and general health.

A high percentage of children eat too much fat and sugar.

Many teenagers can be overfed and undernourished.

The Healthy Eating Promotion Team:

This is made up of the following:

Wellbeing Coordinator.

Teaching staff Home Economics teacher and one other subject teacher.

Parent representative.

Student Council representative.

Aims of the Policy:

- To promote healthy eating in our school, in line with national healthy eating guidelines and school curriculum.
- To make the provision and consumption of food in our school an enjoyable and safe experience.
- To adopt and implement a whole school approach to the promotion of healthy eating behaviours and attitudes in line with the HSE guidelines.

What is Healthy Eating?

The Irish Government's recommendations on healthy eating and a balanced diet are found in the HSE Healthy Eating for Life Guidelines. This resource communicates five key principles of healthy eating as follows:

Eat more vegetables, salad, and fruit – up to seven servings a day.

Limit intake of high fat, sugar, salt foods.

Size matters: Use the food pyramid as a guide to serving sizes.

Increase your physical activity levels.

Small changes can make a big difference.

Objectives of this policy

- To identify, monitor and evaluate nutritious food options available to all school community members in line with the five principles of healthy eating as outlined above.
- To promote quality education on healthy eating and healthy eating habits with all members of our school community.

Food Culture and Environment:

School Canteen:

ECC participates in the free meals scheme and provides nutritious breakfast and lunch options to all students in the canteen.

Fresh today is the company that prepares the food and delivers daily.

Menus are varied throughout the year and printed on noticeboards for students to view.

Three hot meals are on offer each day reflecting lifestyle choices and cultural diversity.

The canteen is designed for students to consume food and socialise at the same time.

Bins are located all around the school and students are encouraged to dispose of litter and food waste appropriately.

The canteen is staffed from 8am until 2:30pm each day.

The school canteen provides meals using compostable materials. No single use plastic bottled items are for sale.

Water fountains are available in the canteen and around the school for refillable water bottles.

The consumption of fruit is encouraged with fruit options freely available for breakfast.

SNA's assist with lunches and delivery of food to students.

Staffroom:

Staff may bring their own lunch or head out for lunch at break time.

The staffroom is equipped with fridges, microwaves, dishwashers and boil water facilities.

There are filtered water fountains around the school for staff also.

Food and drinks available to purchase at ECC:

Students are welcome to bring packed lunches/snacks from home and consume them in school. However, in the interest of health promotion the following items are not allowed and will be confiscated on site.

High sugar and artificially sweetened energy drinks e.g., Monster, Red bull, Shark etc. Fizzy drinks sugary and sugar free.

Failure to comply with the Healthy Eating Policy will result in sanctions as per Code of Behaviour.

Break and Mealtimes at ECC:

Breakfast is available from 8:00 to 8:45am.

Morning break from 11:00 to 11:15am.

Lunch from 1:15pm to 1:55pm.

Action Plan:

The promotion of healthy eating in the school will be addressed through the following subjects:

1. Home Economics, Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), Science, and Physical Education (PE) as well as through social and cultural activities.
2. Cross-curricular links with subjects such as Business, Art, English as well as the Transition Year and LCVP programmes will be used to promote healthy eating.
3. Increased awareness of healthy eating will be achieved using posters and displays throughout the school.
4. A Wellness week will be held every year to increase knowledge, promote physical exercise and emphasise the importance of healthy eating.
5. Engagement with the Student Council to take place on an ongoing basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.
6. The food sold in the school canteen will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that it is conducive to healthy lunch decisions. Foods such as sweets, chocolate bars and fizzy/high energy drinks will not be sold.
7. Parents/Guardians will be made aware of the relevant healthy eating information in the school via the school website and the Parents' Association.
8. The operators of the school canteen, Fresh Today will be requested to implement the guidelines of the Healthy eating Policy in consultation with management.

Policy and Planning:

The school leadership team will monitor the implementation of this Healthy Eating Policy.

The Wellbeing Coordinator will support the school leadership team in monitoring the implementation of healthy eating education in the school wellbeing programme.

The Wellbeing Coordinator in partnership with the Student Support Team will identify and share useful resources and training opportunities with the school community in the promotion of healthy eating.

Opportunities for the promotion of healthy eating are encouraged in the planning of whole school events such as Wellness Week.

Relationships and Partnership:

A copy of the Healthy Eating Policy will be made available to the whole school community on the school website.

Policy reviews will be conducted in line with advances in the promotion of healthy eating. All stakeholders will be included in this process.

School meal menu's will be made readily available to students.

Parents/Guardians are advised to inform the school of any concerns around food allergies or eating issues relating to their child. Arrangements will be made around the communication of the allergies, storage and administration of medication linked to food allergies in partnership with parents and the school.

ECC recognises the links between promoting healthy eating and promoting an active lifestyle as extremely beneficial to student physical and mental wellbeing. All students are actively encouraged to regularly participate in Physical Education. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of school sports teams, wellbeing initiatives and active workshops.