



St Joseph's CBS

Summerhill, Nenagh, Co Tipperary

Healthy Eating Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT

St. Joseph's C.B.S. Nenagh is committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of all students by fostering a whole-school culture of healthy eating. This policy supports students in making informed, nutritious food choices that enhance their physical health, mental wellbeing, concentration, and academic performance.

2. RATIONALE

This policy is necessary because:

- Proper nutrition is essential for adolescent growth, development, and cognitive function
- Healthy eating habits established during school years influence lifelong health outcomes
- Poor diet contributes to obesity, dental decay, Type 2 diabetes, and mental health issues among young people
- Schools play a crucial role in health education and modelling positive behaviours
- National guidelines (HSE, Department of Education) recommend school-based healthy eating initiatives

Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (DES, 2018-2023)

Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Department of Health, 2017)

HSE Healthy Eating and Active Living Programme

Public Health (Alcohol) Act 2018

Child and Family Agency Act 2013

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All students attending St. Joseph's C.B.S. Nenagh
 - All staff members (teaching and non-teaching)
 - School canteen/tuck shop operations
 - Food and drinks brought from home
 - School events, trips, and extracurricular activities
 - Visitors and contractors on school premises during school hours
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4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The policy aims to:

- Promote healthy food and drink choices throughout the school day
 - Create a supportive environment that makes healthy eating the easy choice
 - Educate students about nutrition and its impact on health and learning
 - Reduce consumption of foods and drinks high in sugar, salt, and saturated fat
 - Increase availability and consumption of water, fruit, vegetables, and wholegrains
 - Support families in providing nutritious meals and snacks
 - Comply with national healthy eating guidelines for schools
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5. PROHIBITED FOODS AND DRINKS

The following are banned on school premises:

Energy Drinks:

- All energy drinks including Red Bull, Monster, Lucozade Energy, Boost, Relentless, and similar products

Carbonated Soft Drinks:

- All fizzy drinks including Coke, Pepsi, Fanta, Sprite, 7UP, Club Orange, and similar products
- Diet/zero-sugar versions of carbonated drinks

Rationale: High sugar content, caffeine levels, and artificial additives negatively impact concentration, behaviour, dental health, and sleep patterns.

6. ENCOURAGED FOODS AND DRINKS

Strongly Encouraged:

Drinks:

- Water (tap or bottled) – **best choice**
- Milk (plain, low-fat flavoured)
- Pure fruit juice (100%, small servings)
- Sugar-free diluted juice

Foods:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Wholegrain bread, wraps, crackers
- Lean proteins (chicken, turkey, eggs, beans, hummus)
- Low-fat dairy products (yoghurt, cheese)
- Nuts and seeds (subject to allergy protocols)
- Homemade sandwiches, salads, pasta dishes

Permitted in Moderation:

- Plain biscuits, cereal bars (low sugar)

- Crisps (small packets, occasionally)
 - Chocolate (small bars, occasionally)
 - Treats for special occasions
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7. SCHOOL CANTEEN STANDARDS

The canteen must:

- Comply with *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools* (DoH, 2017)
- Display healthy options prominently
- Price healthy options competitively
- Not sell energy drinks or carbonated soft drinks

Menu Requirements:

- Daily availability of fruit, vegetables, wholegrain options
 - Hot meals with balanced nutritional content
 - Vegetarian and dietary requirement options
 - Clear allergen information displayed
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8. PACKED LUNCHES FROM HOME

Parents/guardians are asked to:

- Include a healthy drink (water, milk, pure juice)
- Provide balanced meals with protein, carbohydrates, fruit/vegetables
- Limit high-sugar, high-salt snacks
- Use reusable containers to reduce waste

Students are responsible for:

- Bringing appropriate food and drink
 - Disposing of waste in designated bins
 - Not sharing food (allergy safety)
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9. DRINKING WATER

The school will:

- Provide free access to clean drinking water throughout the school day
 - Maintain water fountains in working order
 - Allow students to refill water bottles at breaktime and lunchtime
 - Encourage students to bring reusable water bottles
 - Students should use the water fountains to refill bottles before 9am, at breaktime, at lunchtime and before attending Supervised Study
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10. FOOD ALLERGIES AND DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

The school will:

- Maintain confidential records of students with food allergies and intolerances
- Display allergy information in canteen and staff room • Implement emergency protocols for allergic reactions
- Respect religious and cultural dietary requirements
- Communicate with parents regarding special dietary needs

Students must not:

- Share food or drink due to allergy risks
 - Bring foods containing common allergens if classmate has severe allergy (case-by-case basis)
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11. SPECIAL OCCASIONS AND EVENTS

School events (competitive matches, sports days, concerts, parent evenings, open nights etc):

- Healthy catering options prioritised
- Isotonic drinks may be used by sports teams where deemed appropriate by coaching staff
- Water readily available
- Energy drinks and fizzy drinks not served

Fundraising:

- Occasional treat sales permitted (bake sales, chocolate bars) with balance
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12. CURRICULUM AND EDUCATION

Healthy eating will be integrated through:

SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education):

- Nutrition education across all year groups
- Understanding food groups, balanced diet, reading labels
- Impact of diet on physical and mental health
- Media literacy regarding food advertising

Science:

- Biological processes of digestion and metabolism
- Effects of sugar, caffeine, additives on the body

PE (Physical Education):

- Connection between nutrition, hydration, and athletic performance
- Fuelling the body for exercise and recovery

Cookery (TY & LCA Programmes):

- Practical food preparation skills
- Budget-conscious healthy meal planning

- Understanding food provenance and sustainability
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13. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management:

- Approve and endorse policy
- Ensure resources for implementation
- Review policy effectiveness biennially

Principal/Deputy Principals:

- Overall policy implementation and monitoring
- Staff training and support
- Parent communication
- Canteen contract compliance

Staff:

- Model healthy eating behaviours
- Enforce policy consistently
- Integrate nutrition education into teaching
- Monitor and report compliance issues

Students:

- Comply with policy requirements
- Make healthy choices
- Respect school environment

Parents/Guardians:

- Support policy at home
- Provide healthy packed lunches
- Communicate dietary needs/concerns
- Reinforce healthy eating messages

Canteen Provider:

- Menu compliance with policy and national guidelines
 - Staff training on nutrition and food safety
 - Display of nutritional information
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14. IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Phase 1: Preparation (Weeks 1-2)

- Staff consultation
- Student Council consultation
- Parents' Council consultation

- Parent/Guardian communication (letter, website, social media)
- Student information and SPHE lessons
- Communication with Canteen Service Provider

Phase 2: Launch (Week 3)

- Policy goes live
- High-visibility monitoring
- Positive reinforcement for compliance

Phase 3: Embedding (Ongoing)

- Consistent enforcement
- Regular reminders and education
- Monitor trends and adjust as needed

Enforcement Procedures:

- Prohibited items confiscated immediately
- First offence: verbal warning
- Second offence: Year Head informed, parent contact
- Third offence: Deputy Principal referral, disciplinary action per Code of Behaviour

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy will be monitored through:

- Staff discussion and feedback
- Year Head Reports
- Student surveys
- Parent/Guardian feedback through Parents' Council
- Health and wellbeing indicators (attendance, behaviour, concentration)

Full Policy Review

- Every two years by Wellbeing Committee with Board of Management approval.

16. COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated via:

- School website (prominent placement)
- Enrolment packs for new students
- Annual letter to all parents/guardians
- Student journal
- Staff handbook and induction
- SPHE lessons and assemblies
- Notice boards throughout school

17. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Bi Cinealta Policy
 - Code of Behaviour
 - SPHE Policy
 - Health & Safety Statement
 - Substance Use Policy
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18. QUERIES AND CONCERNS

Parents/guardians with queries or concerns about this policy should:

- Contact Year Head or Deputy Principal
 - Contact Board of Management as necessary
 - Special dietary or medical needs requiring policy exemption must be documented with medical evidence and agreed by Principal.
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19. POLICY REVIEW

Next Review Date: April 2028

Review Process:

- Staff discussion and feedback
 - Wellbeing Committee consultation
 - Student Council consultation
 - Parents' Council feedback
 - Board of Management approval
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POLICY APPROVAL

Approved by the Board of Management on 11th of May 2026

Signed: Don O'Brien
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Date: 11th May 2026

Signed: Karen O'Donnell
(Principal)

Date: 11th May 2026