

St. Joseph's Grammar School

Scoil Ghramadaí Naomh Iósaf



Healthy Eating Policy 2023-2024

Policy Author	Mrs A McGleenan	
Frequency of Review	Every 2 years	
Date of Last Review	April, 2023	
Date Approved by Governors	April, 2023	
Proposed by	R. Kelly	
Seconded by	J. McKenna	
Date of Next Review	November, 2025	

St. Joseph's Grammar School recognises the benefits of healthy eating:

- A healthy diet is essential for maintaining and protecting young people's health, for ensuring they perform to their full potential during the school day (both academically and physically) and for their growth and development.
- Eating a wide variety of foods is one of the best ways to help the body get the nutritional contributions it needs each day.
- Nutrition is central to health and diet can be an important influence on the life of young people now and in the future.
- Helps young people develop, grow and do well in school.
- Eating well at a young age is influential to continuing it throughout life.
- Eating is one of the most powerful ways of enhancing or repairing health.
- Establishing healthy eating habits at a young age is critical because changing poor eating habits in adulthood can be difficult.
- Overtime the food young people eat will affect their cholesterol levels, weight, blood pressure, insulin regulation, brain function, emotional health and self-esteem.
- Prevents childhood and adolescent health problems such as overweight and obesity, eating disorders, tooth decay and anaemia. Due to these factors on the rise in today's society it's important to maintain and reinforce healthy eating throughout the school.
- May help prevent health problems in later life, including stroke, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes and prevent certain cancers.
- Sitting down with other young people is an important part of a young person's social education.

St. Joseph's Grammar school is concerned about:

Consequences of unhealthy eating:

- Avoiding breakfast can affect young people's performance in school (intellectually and physically).
- 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 in today's society.
- In Northern Ireland obesity levels in children are increasing with nearly a quarter (22%) of all children starting primary school being classed as overweight or obese and this continues to post primary school.
- Young girls especially, are constantly dieting and concerned about their weight; this has a knock on effect on their body due to loss of essential minerals and vitamins, brain functioning and general health.

- A high percentage of children eat too much fat.
- Many teenagers can be overfed and undernourished.

Concerns:

- Most children in the UK have a diet too high in fat, sugar and salt.
- A survey of children's eating habits in Northern Ireland showed that nearly three quarters (73%) of children had biscuits daily, with half of all children eating confectionary (47%) and savoury snacks such as crisps (52%) at least once a day.
- Only one in ten children (11%) achieved the target of five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, with one fifth (20%) not having any fruit or vegetables on a regular basis.
- Dental decay in children continues to be a significant public health problem in Northern Ireland with three fifths (61%) of 15 year olds showing signs of dental decay compared to the UK average of 43%. The main cause of tooth decay is related to the frequency and the amount of sugar consumed in both foods and drinks.

St. Joseph's Grammar School Aims to:

- Help pupils establish a healthy lifestyle that we hope they continue into adulthood.
- Ensure all aspects of food and nutrition are promoted through the school and the promotion of health and wellbeing.
- Discuss suggestions in relation to provision of food and drinks offered at school student council.
- Encourage healthier breakfasts, breaks and lunches by working alongside canteen staff on a suitable menu for these options at a reasonable cost. Sensory analysis tests will be conducted by a sample of students on new recipe suggestions in collaboration with the Home Economics Department and feedback given to canteen for implementation.
- Maintain and develop a whole school promotion of healthy eating through the use of signage/posters in the canteen, Multi-Purpose Centre and corridors to encourage healthy food choices.
- Publicise on school social media platforms, raise awareness to parents through these platforms, and inform parents and pupils of the foods available providing attractive menus and highlighting the healthiest option.
- Participate in fruit and vegetable taster sessions, food related competitions. Encourage pupils to try unfamiliar new dishes, fruit and vegetables.
- Promote healthy eating by registering for participation in initiatives such as Healthy Eating Week.
- Organise food hygiene one day basic training courses to raise awareness for both staff and pupils
- Encourage students to eat healthier through the use of more attractive presentation of food in the salad bar and sandwich bar provision.

St. Joseph's Grammar Schools objectives:

- Due to a large number of pupils purchasing lunch from the school canteen, health promotion should have an impact on many individuals through the use of menus and signage/posters.
- All young people learn about healthy choices through PD and LLW.
- In Home Economics class, pupils are taught about food, nutrition and healthy eating benefits, consequences of lacking a healthy diet and alongside this they develop practical cooking skills in class.
- In Science basic nutrition is also incorporated into the specification.
- Healthy eating and general lifestyle activity is taught and encouraged in Physical Education in all year groups.

St. Joseph's Grammar School has established the following policy and recommendations:

Curriculum:

- **HE curriculum:**

Healthy eating; nutrition to identify nutrients found in food and learn how they help us grow; organisation and food preparation skills to make healthy nutritious meals; make healthy food; skills to make informed food choices, the importance of water to good health. To encourage the whole school community to have regard for those with nut allergies and coeliac disease.

- **PE curriculum:**

Involved in physical activity; aware of the benefits of activity on health; develop skills; benefit of physical activity and emotional health and dealing with stress; team spirit. Mental and emotional benefits of physical activity on reducing stress and on general wellbeing. Participation in PE lessons, Sports Day and extra-curricular sports and clubs offered.

- **KS3 Science:**

The importance of a healthy diet and the effect of poor choices on health.

Extra-Curricular

- **Gardening Club:**

Through the school gardening club pupils will be introduced to new foods and be able to enjoy observing how different foods are grown and learn a range of skills when cooking. This will hopefully encourage them to try new foods in school and at home.

School Environment:

- Water or sugar free drinks are the only drinks available to purchase in school.
- Pupils are encouraged to bring healthy snacks to school and are asked to be mindful of those with nut or gluten allergies.
- Food allergy/intolerances: all staff and students are made aware of students who have food allergies in September of each year. Photos of students are on display in the staffroom, main office and canteen. Health Plans are in place for students who may need medical intervention in the event of emergency.
- Drinking water: available throughout the day from canteen and study hall. Students are permitted to drink water in class with the exception of the library, ICT suites and science laboratories.

School Canteen:

- Food served at breakfast, break and lunch time should be in line with the Catering for Healthier Lifestyle Guidance issued by the Department of Education and Food in Schools Policy.
- Provide more bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods.
- Provide more fruit and vegetables.
- Provide LESS food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.

St. Joseph's Grammar School Aims to ensure:

A balanced diet with foods from each of the following food groups being included in daily menu.

- fruit and vegetables.
- potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates.
- beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins.
- dairy and alternatives.
- oils and spreads.

St Joseph's Grammar School's key message to pupils:

- Enjoy your food.
- Eat a variety from all food groups each day.
- Don't skip meals (especially breakfast).

St. Joseph's Grammar School is committed to monitoring and reviewing Healthy Eating by:

- Consulting and listening to pupils, parents and staff on their views through surveys, school council etc.
- Keeping up to date with government policy, legislation and recommendations.