



Mount Carmel Secondary School  
Healthy Eating Policy

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## Rationale

Adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth and mental development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients necessary for daily activities. Skipping breakfast and making poor food choices at lunch can have a serious effect on concentration levels and make learning more difficult. 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.

In Mount Carmel school we recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and diet and understand that establishing a balanced diet in childhood helps establish healthy eating habits for life. In order for us all to meet our full potential we need to be healthy and fit; physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

This policy states the ways in which our school community supports pupils to develop the skills and attitudes that will help them make informed healthy choices both in and out of school. We recognise that it is important for the whole school to use consistent messages around healthy eating.

## Aims

- 1) To improve the health of pupils, staff and their families by helping to influence their eating habits through increasing their knowledge and awareness of food issues.
- 2) To provide a consistent programme of nutrition education in order to promote the personal development and wellbeing of the student.
- 3) We aim to encourage our pupils to develop positive attitudes to healthy living and eating as this is a key skill in Junior Cycle Programme.
- 4) Teaching about healthy foods and taking a whole school approach in order to support and encourage long-term habits.
- 5) Providing snacks that are low salt and low sugar to support habits of staff and students.

## Objectives

### Short-Term

- 1) Students will have access to nutritious food at break and lunchtime via the school canteen.
- 2) Promote healthy lifestyle, eating habits and well-being through school activities such as 'Active Week'.
- 3) Parents that opt to send packed lunches are encouraged to provide students with healthy food items.
- 4) Energy drinks are prohibited in Mount Carmel Secondary School.

### Long Term

- 1) Encourage all members of the school community to accept and embrace this policy.
- 2) Gain an understanding and knowledge around healthy eating habits and nutrition.
- 3) Provide the school community with nutritious meals and low sugar snacks.
- 4) Foster healthy habits by educating students of all year groups in a variety of subjects e.g. Home Economics, S.P.H.E, P.E. and Wellbeing.
- 5) Transition Year and Leaving Certificate Applied programmes will incorporate modules such as Hotel, Catering and Tourism as well as Cookery to educate students about nutrition and healthy eating.
- 6) Home Economics and Biology students will learn about nutrition and the workings of the body in detail. This will encourage them to lead a healthy lifestyle.

### **Action Plan**

- The promotion of healthy eating in Mount Carmel will be addressed through a range of subjects at both Junior and Senior Cycle including Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Science, Home Economics, Wellbeing and Physical Education (PE).
- Pastoral Care such as Tutor time and assemblies will be used where possible to reinforce the message of positive food choices on students' physical and mental wellbeing. Students are encouraged to record Healthy Habits in their Tutor Copies.
- Promotion of healthy eating will be achieved through the use of visual displays throughout the school and challenges set by the Wellbeing Committee.
- Information on healthy eating practices will be available on the Mount Carmel app, school website and in the school journal.
- Students will be actively encouraged to take part in extra-curricular activities to ensure a balanced lifestyle is achieved. There is a wide range of activities on offer including football, basketball and badminton.
- Visitors and guest speakers will be invited where possible to offer their expertise on physical and mental health throughout the school year.
- Consultation with the Student Council will take place on an ongoing basis to further develop and promote healthy eating.

- The food sold on the school premises, currently contracted to private catering company *Glanmore Foods*, will be monitored and reviewed to ensure that it is in alignment with the Healthy Eating Policy.
- No fizzy drinks will be available to purchase on the school campus, options such as water and milk will be available in the school canteen.
- All Energy Drinks are not permitted on the school campus and teachers have the responsibility to confiscate if seen.
- The vending machine on school property will only supply low sugar options for students.
- School staff will model healthy eating and lifestyle to promote students to foster similar habits.
- Parents will be made aware of relevant Healthy Eating information via the Mount Carmel website and school app and encouraged to promote a similar healthy lifestyle at home.
- The Home Economics Department will run initiatives to promote a culture of healthy living through the Celebrity Chef JCSP initiative and awarding one student each week with the 'Chef of the Week' award.

### **Monitoring**

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.

### **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Mount Carmel Secondary School at its meeting on 18/4/2023 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.