

## **Healthy Eating Policy- St. Brogans College**

### **Mission Statement**

“St. Brogan's College strives to be a happy, safe, caring and inclusive community where everyone is supported to reach their potential.”

### **Rationale**

This policy has been created in response to the HSE's guidelines which state that schools should empower students to make healthy food choices, ensure that any food provided by schools, to its students, is in line with Healthy Eating Guidelines and a positive eating environment is created, both socially and physically, at mealtimes in schools.

We acknowledge that adolescence is a time of rapid physical growth and mental development. It requires adequate intake of energy and nutrients necessary for daily activities. Thus, for young people to achieve their full potential, a healthy diet is essential. A healthy and balanced lifestyle is also essential to the physical and emotional wellbeing of our students. As a key skill of the Junior Cycle, ‘Staying Well’ recognises that “learners’ overall wellbeing must be supported alongside their intellectual development. This is in line with the mission statement of St Brogans College where we aim to create a happy, safe, caring and inclusive environment for all students.

When promoting healthy eating in our school, it is essential to ensure that our approach is inclusive and sensitive to students who may experience poor body image or low self esteem. We are committed to creating a supportive environment where all students feel respected and safe. Educational messages about nutrition will focus on balance, well-being, and enjoyment of food rather than weight, appearance, or restriction. Staff will be mindful of language and materials used when discussing health and food, avoiding judgemental or body-focused messages. The school will also promote positive body image, encourage self-acceptance, and provide access to appropriate support services for any student who may be struggling with their relationship with food or their body.

This policy aims to support students in developing this key skill by empowering them to make healthy lifestyle choices. We also wish to support The Department of Education’s Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice Wellbeing in education, which states that:

- “The school environment must be conducive to promoting healthy eating choices”
- “The wellbeing of the whole school community is central to the school’s ethos/mission statement and school leaders and management actively promote wellbeing.”

A survey of students was carried out in the school year 2025-2026, the student council was addressed and a staff focus group was created to analyse the requests. These surveys highlighted a commitment and support for a teaching and learning environment where healthy choices are encouraged as part of our ongoing efforts to develop the overall wellbeing of our school community.

## **The Team**

This policy document is the result of the collaboration of a specialist Healthy Eating Policy team, Student Council, and Parents Council together with the Board of Management.

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to establish and maintain a shared philosophy on healthy eating within our school and to ensure that students are aware of the importance of making healthy food choices to fuel their learning and to support an active lifestyle. The implementation of the policy will also be supported by the ongoing work of the Wellbeing Committee.

The policy aims to:

1. To provide a variety of healthy breakfast options and snacks that meet the nutritional needs of students.
2. To educate students about the importance of healthy eating and making informed food choices.
3. To promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
4. To limit the availability of unhealthy food options high in sugar, salt, and saturated fats.
5. Support the key skills of 'staying well' and 'managing myself', central components of the Junior Cycle and incoming Senior Cycle Reform.
6. Establish a positive eating environment, both social and physical, at mealtimes.

## **Procedures and Guidelines**

Guidelines for Hot Meals and Breakfasts

1. Breakfast- Healthy options available for breakfast including, fruit, milk, high fibre cereals, brown bread, yogurt, eggs

2. Meal Composition- All hot meals should include a balance of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats, with at least one portion of fruit or vegetables.
3. Portion Sizes- Portion sizes should be appropriate for the age group, ensuring students receive adequate nutrition without excessive calories.
4. Menu Planning- Menus will be planned in advance and will rotate regularly to provide variety. Input from students will be encouraged to enhance meal acceptance.
5. Special Dietary Needs- The school will accommodate students with specific dietary requirements (e.g., allergies, intolerances, religious preferences) by offering alternative meal options.

### **Guidelines for Snacks**

1. Healthy Options- Snacks provided in the school should include whole fruits, yogurt, crackers, and cheese. Sugary snacks and drinks will be limited.
2. Availability- Healthy snacks will be readily available during break times, promoting healthy choices among students.
3. Fizzy drinks, energy drinks and chewing gum must not be consumed on the school grounds. These items will be confiscated by a member of staff and students in breach of this rule will be noted in their journal. Repeated offenses will result in lunchtime detention.

### **Action Plan**

#### ***Short Term Objectives***

##### **Whole-School Context**

- Teachers will be encouraged to provide non food-related rewards to students during term time.
- There will be a school-wide campaign to promote healthy meals to fuel the brain and body. This will be run by the Healthy Eating Committee and will include the sharing of recipes and displaying of posters around the school.
- The canteen space will be an inviting space for students to enjoy and socialise at mealtimes. Students will create and display artwork and share monthly nutritious recipes.
- We will build awareness of the importance of nutrition and physical exercise for emotional and physical wellbeing. This will be achieved through learning and teaching in SPHE, Science and Home Economics and reinforced by the P .E. department.

## **Long Term Objectives**

### **Whole-School Context**

- Healthy eating promotion will be included in the school's annual current Wellbeing Week.
- The school will encourage healthy lifestyle habits among the entire school community.
- The school canteen will provide healthy and nutritious snacks and meals at break time and lunchtime.
- The school canteen will have adequate seating arrangements and space for all students.
- Students understand the role nutrition plays in their overall health and wellbeing.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

1. Feedback Mechanism- The school will establish a feedback system for students and parents to provide input on meal options and snack availability. This will be done through the use of surveys to delivered to students and parents.
2. Review Process- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of students and aligns with current nutrition guidelines.

## **Implementation Date**

This policy was ratified on \_\_\_\_\_

Timetable for Review: 2027

Ratification & Communication- The policy was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in at which it was formally ratified.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_