

# **ATHBOY COMMUNITY SCHOOL HEALTHY LIVING POLICY**

## Aims

Our school aims to provide a supportive environment for learning and health. Health is defined in its broadest sense as social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive and physical health. All these dimensions of health are interconnected and are influenced by the environments in which we live, work and learn. In our school this requires a whole school approach involving students, school staff, parents and the wider community.

## Objectives

1. To ensure that food supplied in the school environment promotes the adoption of healthy eating habits.
2. To increase physical activity opportunities for all students at the school.
3. To create education, communication and promotion programs to facilitate the adoption of sustainable healthy living habits.
4. To mobilize the different school and community partners to undertake comprehensive, concerted actions that support the adoption of healthy eating and active living habits.

## Principles

The environment in which young people live, particularly the school environment, must promote the adoption of healthy eating and active living habits. Acting simultaneously on diet and physical activity maximizes positive effects on young peoples' health. The situation and circumstances specific to each environment (e.g. existing initiatives, the socioeconomic situation, cultural groups, established habits, and available resources) must be taken into account.

The school environment is an essential factor to consider when planning measures to encourage healthy lifestyles. The orientations described below aim to improve this environment in order to modify and sustain healthy living habits. The orientations will be translated into concrete actions that can promote the adoption and long-term maintenance of healthy living.

The following orientations are intended for school staff. Each orientation consists of elements that the school considers highly important.

## Orientations

1. Offer a variety of foods and give priority to foods of good nutritional value.
2. Eliminate foods of low nutritional value from all school food supplies.
3. Provide appropriate areas and favourable conditions for meals.
4. Make sure that eating areas are safe at all times.
5. Make lunchtime an enjoyable part of the school day by ensuring that eating areas are pleasant and inviting.
6. Increase physical activity opportunities, principally during lunchtime, or extracurricular activities.
  - a. Offer a wider range of recreational activities.
  - b. Incorporate physical activity opportunities into the timetable.
  - c. Offer activities that meet students' varied interests and abilities.
  - d. Offer activities that focus on games and the pleasure of being physically active.
7. Implement educational and promotional activities that foster healthy living e.g. SPHE and RSE lessons.
8. Make all educators aware of the importance of promoting attitudes and behaviours that are essential for the adoption of healthy living habits.
9. Conduct regular activities to promote the adoption of healthy living habits (e.g. Healthy living week, sponsored walks etc)
10. Periodically provide information on initiatives to parents and the community so that they can support the schools' efforts and ensure continuity.
  - a. Post messages, videos, etc. on the school's Web site.
  - b. Include a special section in an annual report.
  - c. Publish articles in local newspapers.
  - d. Hand out brochures published by government ministries or other organisations, relating to health.
  - e. Distribute newsletters on a regular basis.

## Other related policies

Healthy Eating Policy, Substance Misuse Policy, Bullying Policy, Pastoral Care Policy etc.

## Review Procedure

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. The review team will comprise the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and other interested teachers.