

Shimna Integrated College

Physical Activity Policy

Introduction

According to the Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (2004) 32% of girls and 22% of boys are inactive in Northern Ireland. Obesity levels in Northern Ireland are rising at an alarming rate among children due to the consumption of junk food and lack of exercise.

The school is the ideal environment to try to promote the benefits of physical activity to students. We have a responsibility to help students and staff to establish and maintain lifelong physical activity habits. According to the Northern Ireland Chief Medical Officer (2006) Physical activity is one of the most important things individuals can do to maintain and promote physical and mental health. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death and of developing diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, colon cancer, diabetes and obesity as well as combating stress, depression and anxiety disorders. According to the Chief medical Officers report for Northern Ireland (2006) children should be taking at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each day.

Aims & Objectives of the Policy

Promoting physically active lifestyles within the college is important because:

- Physical activity is linked to mental health and can increase the students learning capacity;
- Positive experiences of physical activity lay the foundations for active living in later life promoting independence and freedom from disease;
- Physical activity has huge health benefits for the child and should be promoted in every area of school life.

Objectives

- Raise the profile of physical activity in all aspects of school life;
- Encourage all students to participate in some form of physical activity;
- Encourage Health related exercise principles into the PE curriculum i.e. understanding of fitness and health, benefits of activity etc;
- Provide links to other areas of health such as promoting healthy eating;
- All students will have the opportunity to have good quality PE each week and further opportunities to participate in extra curricular activities after school;
- Offer a broad and balanced activity schedule to meet the needs and interests of all pupils;
- Work with the local community and sporting bodies to develop knowledge and experience of different activities and sports;
- Promote physical activity to all staff in the school;
- Encourage pupils to walk to school where possible.

Physical Activity is defined by Hardman & Stensel (2003) as “any bodily movement produced by contraction of skeletal muscle that substantially increases energy expenditure”.

The provision of physical activity in school

Physical activity in school will be promoted by:

- Establishing an active school
- Increasing participation in PE lessons
- Increasing participation in extra curricular activities
- Active travel to school
- Providing accessible and adequate facilities
- Providing staff opportunities
- Involve parents/guardians
- Involvement of school sport partnerships and communities
- Providing healthy lifestyle talks/days
- Recognising achievement for sport and activities

School Ethos

Each student will be physically educated therefore we will develop the knowledge and skills to perform a variety of physical activities, regularly participating in physical activity, maintaining physical fitness levels; understand the short and long term benefits of physical activity and promote the enjoyment of physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle. Staff will also be informed about the benefits of physical activity as well as being encouraged to participate.

Physical activity lessons

In key stage 3 all pupils will have two hours of Physical Education per week while in key stage 4 pupils will have one hour a week P.E. is also available as an option at G.C.S.E.

Extra Curricular Physical Activity

The school offers a wide range of after school activities to ensure students have a diverse range of activities to participate in, regardless of physical ability. Qualified staff supervise most activities, coaches or instructors who may or may not be qualified teachers may also supervise activities.

The extra curricular activities offered in school include netball, soccer (boys/girls), Gaelic football (girls), cross-country, rugby. The school also offers students an opportunity to gain a Duke of Edinburgh Award and sports leader awards.

Travelling to and from school

Students are encouraged to walk and cycle to school where possible. We provide a cycle storage area for those who wish to use the facility.

Facilities

The college provides a fully equipped gymnasium as well as an outdoor pitch and netball/tennis courts. The school also has the use of facilities at Donard park. The college will ensure that the use of physical education facilities for other curriculum purposes will be kept at a minimum to ensure the provision of physical activity for each student. Access to gym and outdoor facilities is permitted to students after college hours but they must be supervised accordingly.

Staff Opportunities

Currently the school is in the planning stage of promoting physical activity to provide opportunities to participate in regular physical activity such as staff walks. We do recognise the need to promote staff wellbeing and will try to implement further initiatives to ensure this.

Involving Parents and Guardians

The college welcomes involvement from parents and guardians in school activities. As volunteers we will ensure that they are familiar with policies, standards and procedures in the college as part of an induction. The local community sports teams use our facilities both after school and at weekends.

School Sports Partnerships

The school works with sports governing bodies and community organisations to enhance sporting opportunities for our students and staff. Currently we have a rugby coach from IRFU and we are working towards establishing links with other sporting bodies to coach students and to develop their knowledge and experience within other sports.

Sporting achievement

The school recognises the sporting achievements of our pupils in various sports such as cross country, athletics, soccer and netball. We understand the hard work and dedication of both our students and staff in both training and coaching. We will ensure that we fully support students and staff to strive for excellence in sport.

Equal Opportunities

Physical activity in the college will meet the needs and interests of all pupils and staff taking into account gender, cultural differences, physical and cognitive abilities, fitness levels and socioeconomic status to ensure all students are given every opportunity to participate in physical activity at school.

The college is working hard to promote physical activity and ensure all students are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle especially in today's society where inactivity is so common in today's youth.

The college is currently in the planning stage for developing initiatives and promoting physical activity and will therefore put in every effort to ensure the well being of our students and staff.