

HEALTH PROMOTION POLICY

Rationale

This document aims to provide a common vision of health promotion and highlight its benefits and relevance to the Institute of Technology Carlow, taking into consideration current national and international health promotion strategies. The Institute of Technology Carlow recognises that health involves the contributions of many disciplines, professions, groups, agencies and people, and is not the responsibility of one single organisation. It therefore follows that health promotion should adopt a multi-sectored strategic approach. This awareness and resultant actions will foster the development of Institute of Technology Carlow as a health-promoting Institute, protecting and promoting the well-being of staff, students and the wider community in order to enable people to take more control over and improve their health.

The Institute 's Views on Health

The Institute supports the WHO definition of health as, "...a resource for everyday life, not an object of living; it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities." Health is concerned with the physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the whole person or community, and is influenced by the interplay of personal, environmental and socio-economic factors. The Institute recognises its responsibility to incorporate an awareness of and commitment to health in its broadest sense within its culture, structures and processes.

Policy Statement on Health Promotion

Institute of Technology Carlow is committed to protecting and promoting the health and well-being of staff, students and the wider community. The following provisions underpin this commitment:

1. The Institute provides the services of a full-time Nurse, Counsellor and the services of two local doctors.
2. The services of the nurse and doctors are available through the Health Centre in the Institute.
3. The Institute integrates health promotion within its planning and policy processes, through:
 - consideration of health as a central criterion within policies, plans and procedures
 - monitoring the health impact of policies and procedures
 - encouraging participation in health promotion activities within the Institute.
4. The Institute supports the holistic development of students and staff through:
 - identifying and responding to health-related concerns and needs
 - creating supportive environments
 - providing innovative student and staff support systems
 - providing accessible and appropriate information, services and facilities.
5. The Institute aims to develop, in students and staff, an awareness of health and increase competencies in health promotion.
6. The Institute aims to create environments which are sustainable and supportive to health, through:
 - developing systems which ensure buildings and all areas of the campus take account of health and physical access.
3. The Institute aims to support and promote health within the wider community, through:
 - working in partnership with local authorities, Health Boards, and other agencies
 - ensuring close co-operation with the voluntary and statutory sector e.g. Suicide Awareness, Road Safety, *etc.*
 - developing its role as a resource for communities and providing maximum access to the educational resources and specialist expertise of the Institute.

Policy Implementation

The policy incorporates the following policies and initiatives:

- Alcohol policy
- Smoke Free Workplace policy (part of Health & Safety Committee, HR)
- Drugs policy
- Dignity at Work policy (available from Human Resources)
- Equal Opportunities policy (available from Human Resources)
- Health & Safety policy (available from Human Resources)
- Physical Activity policy
- Healthy Eating policy
- Stress & Mental Well-being policy

Implementation of this policy is primarily the responsibility of management.

However, all members of the Institute community have a responsibility to support managers in this undertaking. The policy is implemented through a wide range of health promoting initiatives, including service provision, awareness-raising, monitoring, capacity-building, information provision and collaboration. Partnership group oversees implementation and monitoring of Health

Promotion policy, Chaired by member of Senior Management, with representation from various functions i.e. Student Services, Health, Academic Council, Access, Students' Union, Estates.

Healthy Eating Policy

Nutrition plays a vital role in the growth, repair and maintenance of healthy bodies. The quality and quantity of the food we eat has been shown to contribute greatly to our health. To increase the percentage of the population who consume the recommended daily servings of food and maintain a healthy weight, it is necessary to avail of all opportunities to promote healthy eating habits including those opportunities in the workplace.

- Healthier options clearly highlighted in canteen / restaurant
- Healthy choices available in vending machines
- Nutritional information posted on health information notice board and on the Institute Website.
- Filtered water and or water dispenser available on site.
- Healthy choices available for staff and students working unsocial hours.
- Provision of Workshops on healthy eating
- Information available on local supports available within the Institute and the community
- Provision of onsite peer-support group to assist in supporting individuals as part of a weight reduction programme.
- Participation in national campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining a healthy balanced diet.

Copy of this policy is available in each Department.

Alcohol Policy

This policy aims to address concerns about the promotion of alcohol on campus and the damaging effects of excessive consumption of alcohol by students of the Institute on their academic performance and lifestyle. Alcohol is a major health issue. In the workplace the after effects of alcohol can affect staff performance, safety at work and absenteeism rates.

The current national message is "LESS IS MORE"

- The consumption of alcohol on campus is prohibited (unless authorised by the Director/Director's nominee).
- No alcohol to be given as prizes at Institute sports events
- Alcohol Drinks Company representatives are not permitted on campus
- Advertisements *re.* alcohol or alcohol-related promotions are prohibited on campus.
- The Institute to seek sponsorship for sports clubs, etc. as an alternative to sponsorship from

- Drinks Companies, Local hostels, etc.
- Lunchtime entertainment organised by Students' Union is provided as an attractive alternative to pub-based, lunch-time recreation.
- Non-alcohol related social space (Healthy Zone) to be a priority.

Copy of this policy is available in each Department.

Drugs Policy

A drug is any chemical which alters how the body works or how a person behaves or feels.

Misuse occurs when the use of a drug is harmful or potentially harmful to the physical, mental or social well-being of an individual group or society.

- Use of and supply of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on campus.
- Provision of Counselling and employee assistance programmes available to students and staff who need individual support.

Copy of this policy is available in each Department.

Physical Activity Policy

The benefits of regular physical activity are numerous, including improved heart and lung function, reducing stress and promoting social interaction. The current recommendations are to accumulate 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week and to encourage more people to be more active more often.

- Marked out or measured walking route both indoor or outdoors.
- Provision of secure place for parking bicycles
- Provision of showers and changing facilities
- Stairways made attractive and accessible for usage
- Provision of simple "knockabout" facilities
- Motivational signs at points of decision making i.e. lifts, stairwells
- Display physical activity information on health notice board and on Website
- Information on local services available within the Institute and the community
- Provision of Sports Rehabilitation Clinic on campus
- Promotion of physical activity programme to encourage individuals to be more physically active.
- Participate in national campaigns to promote physical activity such as "walk to work" day step the stairs" week.
- Organise activities that focus on the participation and fun aspect of being physically active along with the competitive aspect for example treasure trails, family activity days, walks, learn to swim classes, leagues, etc.
- Provision of gym facility for staff and students on site.
- Corporate membership for staff and students in local leisure facilities.

Copy of this policy is available in each Department.

Stress & Mental Well-Being Policy

The impact of stress on our lives is being increasingly acknowledged and recognised. Stress can be defined as the mismatch between the demands placed on us and our perceived ability to meet these demands. While some stress may help to keep us motivated, when we experience continuous stress over a period of time, our ability to cope with the demands being placed on us is diminished, this can lead to reduced physical and mental well-being in all aspects of our lives.

- Information on stress and well-being posted on health notice board and available through the Institute Website.
- Provision of "chill out"/quiet room for staff and students
- Information available on the supports available within the Institute and the community
- Relaxation sessions – Yoga, etc.
- Provision of training in the following areas:
- People skills

- Time management
- Assertiveness
- Team building
- Time management training
- Development of a system to optimise working conditions and to effectively communicate any changes within the organisation to staff and students
- Counselling available to students who need individual support
- Employee Assistance Programme available to employees who need individual support
- Provision of workshops on stress management
- Participation in national campaigns to promote awareness about the effects of stress

Copy of this policy is available in all Departments.