

The “Extension of a School Canteen” by St John’s Junior National School (JNS) and St Paul’s Senior National School (SNS) Breakfast Club in Drogheda.

The breakfast club in St John’s JNS and St Paul’s SNS is managed by an inter-agency committee which meets approximately once every three months during school term time and is responsible for the overall strategic management of the breakfast club.

The breakfast club is managed by a coordinator and a Community Employment (CE) scheme catering supervisor on a day-to-day basis. It is staffed by 20 catering assistants, employed on a CE scheme by DYD.

The CE scheme is a training project to enable people who are long term unemployed or other disadvantaged people to get back to work. The coordinator is supported by an assistant coordinator. Four monitors are employed to supervise the children in the dining room as well as en route to and from their classrooms and the dining room.

The breakfast club is funded and supported by a variety of sources including the Department of Education & Science, Drogheda Partnership, Drogheda Youth Development, Drogheda Borough Council/RAPID, Department of Social & Family Affairs, Dormant Accounts Fund, FÁS and the schools’ boards of management and parents’ council. Funding is secured year on year.

The Department of Education & Science provides three classrooms to be used exclusively by the breakfast club. Drogheda Youth Development (DYD) plays a key role in maintaining the club’s current funding structure through FÁS. The Parents’ Council maintains the structure of the club by providing the entry way for DYD (and hence FÁS) to be involved in the breakfast club.

Day-to-Day Operation

Staff start work in the breakfast club at 7.45am. The club is open from 8.15am to 9.00am, and again from 11.00am to 11.15am for ‘little lunch’ for the pupils of St Paul’s SNS only. It re-opens from 12.40pm to 1.15pm for lunch. Lunch comprises of a choice of two hot meals and a salad dish.

In terms of the nutritional quality of the food on offer, the school is liaising with the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service with a view to improving the menu and to developing a healthy school food policy.

Charging for the Service

The food in the breakfast club is not free. Each item has a price, albeit a low price, which is the same for everyone. This lack of differentiation allows those most in need of the service to avail of it without fear of being stigmatised. The club does, however, make an effort to ‘target’ those children identified as being in need of food and whose families may not be able to afford the price of the food in the club. In such a case, the cost of the food is waived for the children, who are told that their parents have already paid for the food ‘on the book’. This way, no child is made to feel any different from anyone else, while the target children receive the support and food that they need.

Our website includes a full copy of the [Impact analysis of the St John’s JNS and St Paul’s SNS Breakfast Club](#) (Fitzgerald 2006)