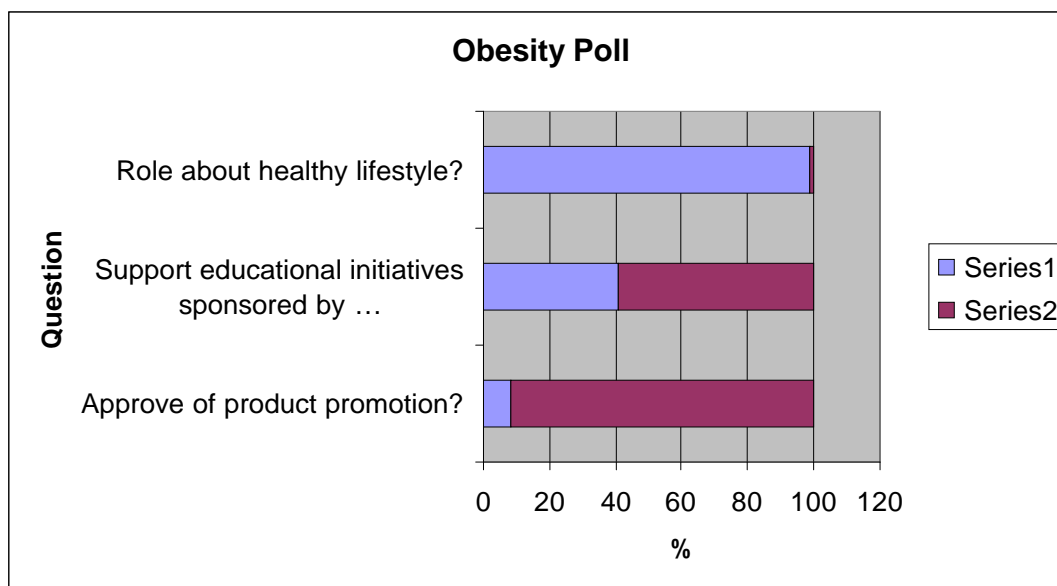


IPPN Obesity Survey Results

Obesity Survey Data

Total Respondents: 510	% Yes	% No
School's Role re healthy lifestyle?	99	1
Support educational initiatives sponsored by ...	41	59
Approve of product promotion?	8	92



Direct Quotes from Principals

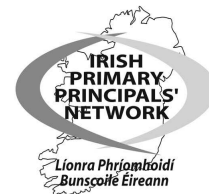
Last week we got a call from our local GAA club asking if we would accept a consignment of Coca Cola for our pupils! We had a visit from the president of the GAA accompanied by other high-ranking officials and a county player. We were presented with a certificate commemorating this visit on which the Coca Cola logo is prominently displayed. The whole event was over before I realised how we had been conned! Deirdre, Dublin West

I feel that schools are not the place to allow advertising. School should be a safe place for children. The DES should finance schools sufficiently that schools do not have to accept help from companies in return for advertising space. This year has been the worst so far for the amount of advertising that has come to our school.

Ask Cumann na mBunscoil why they got 'into bed' with McDonalds for their Catch n' Kick programme. Enda Nolan

I have no problem with these multi nationals or indeed with our own Irish companies, newspapers groups etc., who wish to 'support' children's wellbeing and who wish to improve school resources. I say let them give us this financial help anonymously with no strings or

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advertising involved. Then we would truly know their real commitment to our children. I somehow suspect that these 'concerned' organisations would quickly lose interest in such noble endeavours. It is simply scandalous the way schools are seen as just more markets for their advertising. All Schools should employ a complete ban on any involvement whatsoever in such cynical promotions. Deasun Hennessy

In an under-funded educational system it can be very difficult to resist some initiatives which may be offered at no cost to the school, even when these initiatives are sponsored by "unhealthy food" companies e.g. who else, apart from McDonalds, has ever given schools free footballs, team bibs etc. in the recent past, bearing in mind the meagre DES grant towards PE? Sometimes it's a case of "needs must"! A moral dilemma!

Successful marketing and targeting of children by food and drinks companies has had a profound effect on the level of obesity now evident in school children throughout Ireland. An investment in resources and training in PE Programmes by the DES would be welcomed by this teacher. Also a ban on advertising aimed at children on TV. Hope this is helpful Margaret,

Children's text books (especially Irish) are full of references to fast foods -- burger, chips. Crisps, pizza, cola. This just shows how much fast foods have become a way of life. All we can do is emphasise the fact that these are for occasional eating or treats, not everyday and regular eating. This is where the food pyramid comes in and is so important. Frank, Tipperary.

I really feel that if schools were adequately resourced in the area of sports equipment they would not dream of accepting sponsorship from companies who cleverly target children through attractive offers of sponsorship. We really have been placed in a position of "all offers gratefully received" A. Kingston

Too many promotions coming into schools - one, in fact (The Independent newspapers one) endorsed by the Minister of Education and Science. It puts children/parents under undue pressure which is simply abusing the power of schools. J. O'Niell

There should be a Healthy Lunch Box Policy in all schools. Department of Ed & Science to appoint Physical Education Instructors to visit schools throughout the country giving guidance to teachers and encouraging children in all areas of sport. This would happen if the DES was even remotely serious about children's health and fitness.

Maybe Noel Dempsey would provide us with a hall or gym in school.....!!

Childhood Obesity is also linked in my opinion to lack of exercise as well as diet. Schools could have a greater impact in this if they had proper PE facilities and lower pupil-teacher ratio as they have in many European schools. However the minister now told schools to use their PE Rooms as classrooms. Many schools have no PE Rooms or are already using them as classrooms. So before the minister has any more bright ideas on schools solving childhood obesity he should get back to basics and give us proper schools. John, Donegal

Very often educational initiatives funded by McDonalds, Coca Cola etc are lucrative and provide sports equipment and classroom resources which otherwise cannot be bought by school due to lack of funds. Frustrated!

Hard call when it comes to getting much needed sports equipment etc from the likes of McDonalds or refusing same because of problems their products are causing. Without doubt the parents need to be educated and to take more responsibility for their children's eating habits. I feel teachers CAN and Do play an important role but SHOULD'NT have to. Valerie Bhreathnach.

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What's the point in being against such promotions (even though I suppose that we really should) when Cumann na mBunscoil is actively supporting them - McDonalds - with gaelic football and hurling skills programmes! James.

We do have a role to play as do parents and more to the point Roinn Oideachais or Sláinte. We need proper facilities for P.E. not bits of a school yard with no proper surface. I could go on but the Depts. seem to think that producing a glossy brochure and circulating it to schools will do and think we can change the world. I also feel that there is too much emphasis on winning in schools as regards sporting activities. Only 25 players get on panels. What happens to the rest? Leave the competitions to the clubs and they should also play their part by not having any competition until kids are 14. We all have responsibilities but schools should not be the ones carrying the heavy load.

Companies want to make profit - Multi-nationals see gaps in the market and fill them. DES under-funds schools - therefore the time is always ripe for companies to promote their products through schools. Catch 22?

McDonalds and Coca Cola are world leaders in the area of targeting children in their promotions. McDonalds involvement in Gaelic Football and the Coca Cola involvement in the Compromise Rules Internationals are two of the most recent attempts to promote their brand names among the children. The Coca Cola bus and tour of the factory in Dublin is another attempt to inculcate the brand loyalty image in the children. As educators we have a very important function to make children aware of the huge negative influence exerted by the multinational food companies on our diet and general health and well being. As well as covering the whole topic of nutrition and healthy eating we should be making the children aware of the whole question of sustainable agriculture in the context of the overall future of the planet. We should be exploring the myth of cheap food with our pupils. Micheál Ó Braonáin

It takes great effort to promote a healthy eating policy in a school from the point of view of - time demands made on a lot of working parents today(across the socio economic spectrum) and the convenience of commercial snack food products and drinks -lack of education re nutrition and healthy eating among disadvantaged families. School guidelines/policy need to be supported by broader community focused initiatives from the Health Boards. In Primary schools for many of the younger children, the responsibility lies with parents/guardians for lunch provision. Mary Hankard

While we have received and accepted footballs/hurleys sponsored by McDonalds many of the staff are uneasy with the support the GAA are indirectly giving by organising these competitions (i.e. Catch and Kick....)

As resources for schools are very scarce, I must admit to accepting the McDonald's GAA pack but I then removed all the self-adhesive logos & calling the programme "St. Ronan's GAA Skills Programme". Áinnle Ó Néill