**December 2015 Vol. 7, Issue 2**

# Health Promoting Schools

**ACE Schools Programme**

*Newsletter*

Seasons greetings to all our ACE Schools!

 First, congratulations to all the ACE Schools who got their ACE Awards in October. Keep reading for updates on what some schools have being doing this year to help their school communities become healthier!

 We also have to congratulate our ACE Schools who have recently been awarded a *Health Promoting School* Flag. These schools have worked hard to improve all aspects of health for the school community, and we’re delighted that their work is being recognised nationally. More details of these schools can be found over the page.

 Winter is the time of the year when we need to be taking extra good care of our health. Keep reading for some tips on keeping healthy this winter.

 Finally, remember that the Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service is available to help if you have any concerns about your child’s diet. Feel free to contact the service on 044 939 5518.

 Merry Christmas,

 ACE Schools Programme Co-ordinator

**Fruits and Vegetables - Bug Busters for the Christmas season!**

Yes, we’ve heard it all before about how great fruits and vegetables are for our health. This is very true, but there is a big difference between knowing something and actually doing it! Some practical tips to help increase fruit and vegetables in your family’s diet are listed below.

* Chop fruit into bite-sized pieces - slice an apple or an orange and wrap it in cling film - great for your lunchbox!
* Cut a raw carrot into sticks or pop 5-6 cherry tomatoes into the lunchbox for a healthy snack to munch on
* Experiment a little with your fruits and vegetables! For example, your child might not like carrots boiled, but they might like them roasted, stir-fried or mashed with parsnip or turnip
* Grate a couple of carrots into minced meat during cooking. You won’t even see them, let alone taste them!
* Soup is a great easy way to include more vegetables into your child’s diet
* Be positive at mealtimes - there is no point in turning the table into a battlefield. Encourage your child to try vegetables at every dinner time. Always try to put a small amount of vegetables onto your child’s plate. Try to ignore the ‘failures’ and always praise the successes!

**Schools awarded a *Health Promoting School* Flag!**

Special congratulations to 4 schools who have done lots of healthy work in their schools communities and taken part in the ACE Programme over the past few years. Their healthy efforts have been recognised, and these schools will all be awarded a national *Health Promoting School* Flag.

 These schools are: **St. Gabriel’s NS**, Kilconnell, **Scoil Bhride**, Ballyboy, **Sacred Heart NS**, Granard, and **St Joseph’s NS**, Longford Town. Well done!

**Latest news from our healthy schools!**

## Streamstown NS, Co Westmeath

Pupils in Streamstown NS are taking part in a **Cool Dude Food Cookery** course. They have learned lots of healthy messages and have cooked delicious dishes to match these healthy messages. Bon appétit! The school promotes mental health, by having a Friendship Week in early November, and by introducing *Playground Friends*, where 6th Class help younger pupils develop positive play on the yard. Wonderful work, well done!

## St Michael’s NS, Castletown Geoghegan, Co Westmeath

The school organised a harvest feast at Halloween! The 6th Class pupils dug up vegetables from the school garden and made a big pot of soup. Every pupil had a cup of homemade soup, and enjoyed the fruits (or vegetables!) of their labours in the school garden! As a healthy treat to wish their principal well in his retirement, parents made fresh fruit salads for the pupils. What fantastic healthy work! Well done!

## St Clare’s NS, Tubberclare, Co Westmeath

There’s more great work promoting healthy eating in St Clare’s NS. The 4th Class pupils did some healthy cooking as part of the **Cool Dude Food Cookery** course, and the school is also taking part in Food Dudes to encourage fruit and vegetable intake. On top of this great work, the school promotes mental health, with classes having a *Bubble Box* in which pupils can put messages about positive events or worries that are on their mind. The school also invited Pat

Courtney to speak to senior classes, parents and teachers on positive school environments and bullying. Well done!

## Sacred Heart NS, Granard, Co Longford

There’s more cooking in the Sacred Heart NS, with 6th Class pupils taking part in a **Cool Dude Food Cookery** course. The ACE Team continue to do great work encouraging all pupils to avail of their healthy school lunches. So there’s lots of healthy eating in Sacred Heart NS! The school also promotes healthy smiles, with classes using a tooth model over the term to promote good dental hygiene. Brilliant work!

## Kilcleagh NS, Co Westmeath

All pupils in Kilcleagh NS are being encouraged to drink water and are permitted water bottles on their desks. The pupils also took part in the Food Dudes programme to encourage more fruits and vegetables in lunchboxes, and they also promote their 11 o’clock break as a *Fruit & Veg break*. The school was awarded a *Health Promoting School* flag last year, and are doing really well keeping up their healthy habits!

## St Gabriel’s NS, Co Galway

St Gabriel’s NS renewed their Active School Flag this term! Well done on all that healthy work! Junior pupils took part in the *Share a Breakfast Moment* initiative, and learned about the importance of a healthy breakfast. The 3rd and 4th Class are enjoying their **Cool Dude Food Cookery** course. The pupils from 2nd, 3rd and 4th Class are also busy helping the local Tidy Towns Committee, by doing some work with artist Lily Kelly to design and make a sign for the community garden. That’s fantastic healthy work across the board - well done!

HSE Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service (Midlands)

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