Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child’s/children’s school is participating in the Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme, which aims to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables. Health experts recommend that children (and adults) eat 5 - 7 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. However, many children currently eat less than this.

The programme is managed in Ireland by Bord Bia and receives financial support from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the European Union through the School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme – under which the EU has made funds available for the purchase and distribution of fruit and vegetables to schools.

For 16 consecutive school days, children receive free fruit and vegetables in school and are rewarded with stickers and small rewards for eating these foods. Children will then be encouraged to bring in and eat fruit and vegetables from home as part of their daily diet and will be rewarded with certificates of achievements. Up to 5 additional fruit and veg tasting days will also be provided to the school later in the year.

The aim of the programme is to encourage children to repeatedly try fruit and vegetables so that they can learn to like them. The programme depicts positive role models, the Food Dudes, in a series of DVD adventures and letters are read out in class that encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables. Stickers and small rewards are offered for participation in the programme. The small rewards are designed for primary school children aged 4 years and over.

Beginning the week after the midterm, for 16 days of the programme your child will receive a free piece of fruit and a portion of vegetables at school. You may wish to adjust the amount of food in your child’s lunchbox to accommodate these additional foods. The programme takes only a small amount of time in school but will hopefully result in health benefits for all who participate.

Your child will automatically be included in this programme. However, if for any reason you do not want your child to take part (e.g. if they are allergic to a certain type of fruit or vegetables), we would be grateful if you could inform the school.

For further information on the programme and healthy eating ideas, please see our website; **www.fooddudes.ie**

We hope you and your child have fun with the Food Dudes!

**Your Regional Food Dudes Project Manager**

Elaine O’ Gorman