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, with national average intake of fruit and vegetables less than half that recommended.

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.

The aim of the programme is to encourage children to try fruit and vegetables and come to enjoy the taste of the foods. They also come to think of themselves as healthy eaters who enjoy fruit and vegetables. The programme takes only a small amount of time in school but will hopefully result in health benefits for all who participate.

There are two levels of participation in the programme within the school; for junior classes and for senior classes. Pupils in senior classes in the school will be offered the opportunity to participate for eight days, tasting each of the provided fruit and vegetables twice. They will be rewarded with small prizes for eating these foods. Children then receive fruit and vegetable containers which encourages them to bring in and eat fruit and vegetables from home as part of their daily lunch diet. Up to 5 additional fruit and veg tasting days will also be provided to the school later in the year.

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 vegetable), 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