

BACKGROUND

A child needs to be in the best physical state for learning in order for the brain to take in information.

Children need to drink water throughout the day to remain hydrated. It is evident from numerous pieces of research available that school children are not drinking enough water in schools. This results in problems with health and behaviour and affects learning ability.

Here are some of the benefits of drinking fresh water during the day:

- The brain is 75% water so even moderate dehydration can cause headaches
- Water is required for expiration
- Water regulates body temperature
- Water carries nutrients and oxygen to all cells in the body
- Blood is 92% water
- Water helps the body to remove waste
- Bones are 22% water and muscles are 75% water

Source: The International Bottled Water Association

Early signs of dehydration include:

- Thirst
- Poor concentration
- Lethargy
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Heat intolerance
- Dry mouth and bad breath
- Light headedness
- Dark strong smelling urine
- Diminished physical and sports performance

Problems associated with dehydration:

Health

- Urinary tract infections lead to kidney damage
- Daytime wetting
- Bed wetting
- Constipation
- Damage to cardio vascular system
- Headaches

Behaviour

- Irritability
- Lack of concentration
- Lethargy
- Lack of alertness
- Mood swings

ACTION

It is therefore vital that schools play a part in encouraging children to drink water during the day. The above information was shared with staff at a recent staff meeting led by our local school nurses who are supporting our school in this new initiative. The details which follow are based on their recommendations.

PROCEDURES

We support the initiative to encourage children to drink more water during the day. As a sign of our commitment, we shall issue each child in our school with a water bottle. These water bottles have been designed exclusively for the educational market and come with a 'non-spill' cap. We would like each child to take their bottle home at the **end of each day** so that it can be washed and filled up for the following day. (Please see the notes on hygiene).

It is very important at the beginning of any new initiative that the children are aware of our expectations. We have therefore agreed on the following points so that there is consistency throughout the school.

- Children in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 will keep their water bottles in a central location within the classroom. Children in Key Stage 2 will keep their water bottle at their place.
- It is the children's responsibility to fill their bottle. There will be opportunities for this at playtimes and lunchtimes. Children will not be allowed to fill their bottles during lesson times. All of our sinks now provide drinking water.
- Children will only be allowed to have **water** in their bottle. (This does not include squash or flavoured water). Children may have a fruit drink at lunchtime if they wish (we suggest that these are low sugar drinks).
- Children can drink water during lesson times however, when their teacher is directly teaching the whole class, they should wait until this has finished.
- For safety reasons, children should not walk around with their water bottle in their mouth.

HYGIENE

It is essential that water bottles are washed and refilled each day. Bottles should be thoroughly washed in hot soapy water, rinsed in clean water and air dried upside down. Both caps and bottles can be washed in a dishwasher. Bottles and caps should be periodically soaked in sterilising solution (eg. Milton). Please note that although the print will fade with repeated hot washing the plastic will not deteriorate.

(Notes for this section taken from Osprey Products-bottle manufacturers)

(January 2005)

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School



WATER DURING THE SCHOOL DAY