

January 2018



Dear Parents /Carers,

After careful consideration we have taken the decision to ban high caffeine energy drinks at Eaton Bank Academy. Over the last few years there has been a marked increase in the number of students drinking high caffeine, 'energy boost' drinks and we have for some time been very concerned about the physiological effects and longer term impact these drinks can have on children in school.

Waitrose recently brought the matter back into national attention by being the first major retailer to ban the sale of energy drinks to Under 16s and it is likely that other retailers will follow them in this decision. We feel that this is a good time to reinforce our views on this matter, that energy drinks are not good for children's health and wellbeing, and as such are banned with immediate effect from the school site. We are not in control of what children drink before and after school but with your support I am sure that we can make a very positive change for the good of our children to avoid unhealthy and over-stimulating, sugar-rich drinks.

I have been running assemblies throughout the week to inform the students of this decision. During the assemblies I have given the students a sense of the medical issues that underpin why we have taken this stance. I have provided below, a small sample of the research and thinking around this topic. As I am sure you will agree, given that cans of energy drinks specifically state that they are not suitable for children, it seems like a sensible move to ban them from Eaton Bank Academy.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Ed O'Neill

Headteacher

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- A typical 500ml can of energy drink contains more than 78g of sugar (equivalent of 20 spoons of sugar).
- Caffeine can make you feel more alert, boost your mental and physical performance, and even elevate your mood. But it can also make you jittery, keep you from sleeping, cause rapid pulse or abnormal heart rhythms, and raise blood pressure.
- In light of this, The British Heart Foundation and Public Health England are clear that 'energy drinks' are not a healthy option. The main thing that energy drinks will provide is energy - from the sugar that is added to them – and it would be more nutritious to have water or a glass of low fat milk.
- Graham MacGregor, professor of cardiovascular medicine at Queen Mary University of London and chairman of Action on Sugar, said: "Children are being deceived into drinking large cans of this stuff, thinking they are going to improve their performance at school, during sports, or even on a night out. In reality all they are doing is increasing their risk of developing obesity or type 2 diabetes which will have lifelong implications on their health. Type 2 diabetes is a leading cause of blindness, limb amputation and kidney dialysis - hardly the image of a healthy, active person."

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