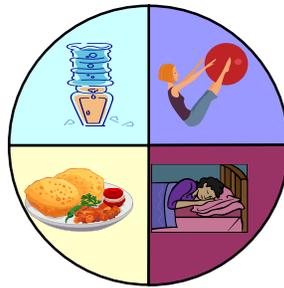


## *Healthy lifestyle policy*

### *Aim of the policy:*

Here at iCAN we are a learning focused school. We understand that diet and exercise have a great part to play in enabling the brain to work effectively. We aim to raise awareness of this by teaching our staff, children and families about brain friendly health.



### *The brain needs water*

**The research:** Nearly 80% of the brain is water. Every thought in the brain of a child is the result of a chemical or electrical reaction in the brain. These are created when chemicals and proteins mix with water. Without the water, the right reactions cannot take place. If our learners do not have enough water, their brains become sluggish.

**Action:** Everyone has the right to access clean drinking water. We try to encourage children to drink water during the school day. At iCAN, learners are actively encouraged to bring clearly labeled refillable water bottles into school every day. These can be kept in the classroom so that each learner can have access to water freely without needing to leave the classroom. These bottles are also taken to other areas of our school such as the canteen, the gym and classrooms where they take specialist lessons. Water dispensers are located on each corridor and in the canteen area. These are fully accessible to all learners in school. For health and safety reasons, learners are required to take their drink bottles home each day to be washed and refilled.

### *The brain needs good food*

**The research:** A child's brain uses more energy than any other part of their body. Everything a child learns, inside or outside of school, takes energy. Blood delivers nutrients to the brain, which it gets from the food they eat.

**Action:**

- Our school lunches have been specially designed to suit the dietary needs of a learner at iCAN
- Those children with home lunches are encouraged to bring a healthy balanced meal
- Fresh fruit and soya milk are provided at break times for all learners
- Children learn about brain friendly foods during PSHCE and IPC /IMYC science lessons
- Family workshops, newsletters and leaflets are offered to families to emphasise the link between diet and brain activity
- On occasion when children are able to bring in food to an event, they are encouraged to bring in healthy options - any unhealthy (high in fat/sugar) will be sent back home with the child

*The brain needs blood and oxygen*

**The research:** A learner's brain takes its food, proteins, oxygen and so on, from the blood that passes through it. As the brain uses up so much energy, it requires lots of oxygen. In fact, a child's brain uses 20% of all of the oxygen it takes in. Recent research has shown how important physical activity and PE lessons are to the brain.

**Action:**

- Our school curriculum provides 1 hour of PE and 1 hour of swimming each week
- Our ASA programme provides a number of physical activities including dance and sport
- From Tuesday to Friday, primary learners have an opportunity to participate in 'Wake Up & Shake Up' before the start of the school day

*The brain needs sleep*

**The research:** There are two kinds of sleep. The first, REM sleep, takes place four times a night and lasts about 90 minutes each time. During REM sleep a child's brain is very active but their body shuts down. Research has shown that during this time the brain is going over all of its experiences from the previous day. The last of these four periods of sleep is where our brain does the business of remembering. In between these REM sleeps is the second, deeper sleep. This is where the brain shuts down and the body is more active.

**Action:**

- We offer family workshops so that parent/carer(s) can learn and understand the importance of bedtime routines and a good night's sleep
- We share information about the importance of bedtime routines and a good night's sleep in newsletters and other publications such as our website, Weebly and Facebook page
- Day openers are used to check on the welfare of the children to see if they are ready to learn and what barriers might be in their way.

### *WAKE UP & SHAKE UP – additional information*

‘Wake Up & Shake Up’ happens every Tuesday to Friday morning before the start of the school day, for between 5 – 10 minutes. We believe that it has the following impact on our learners:

- Enjoyment of school life and a sense of well-being (staff too!)
- Improved self-esteem impacting on other curriculum areas: ‘success breeds success’
- Improved co-ordination
- Improved rhythm and timing
- Improved concentration and application to tasks immediately after the brief exercise session
- Increased stamina
- Improved behaviour
- Improved hydration

### *PEER MASSAGE*

Each week learners are able to take part in a peer massage session. They are differentiated across the primary school and last for approximately 15 minutes. All children are encouraged to participate during this session.

Studies and observations have shown that:

- Children become calmer and have improved concentration
- Children have more confidence and increased self esteem
- It teaches children to respect others and leads to social inclusion
- There is a reduction in bullying and aggression
- Emotional health improves
- It helps children recognise ‘good’ and ‘bad’ touch
- Children show improved motor skills
- It encourages visualisation and kinaesthetic learning
- Children are encouraged to make choices
- Cooperation improves as children work in pairs and in groups
- There is a calmer classroom environment
- The teacher benefits from all these aspects
- Massage is fun!

### *TEETH CLEANING*

Dental hygiene is very important and rates of tooth decay are high in Phnom Penh. We encourage all learners to brush their teeth after lunch each day.

### *WEARING A HELMET*

Children and adults travelling to and from school on motos or bicycles are expected to wear a helmet for their own safety. Please refer to the iCAN handbook for additional information for staff.