

Over 100 EatSmart Schools promote healthy eating environment for primary students (with photos)

The EatSmart School Accreditation Scheme (ESAS) under the EatSmart@school.hk (ESS) campaign, has been jointly organised by the Department of Health (DH) and the Education Bureau (EDB) since the 2009/10 school year. The ESAS has long received full support from the education sector. So far, over 100 schools have attained the accreditation of EatSmart School, the highest honour in the ESAS, to promote healthy eating on campus, and encourage and cultivate students to develop healthy eating habits to safeguard their health in the long run.

The ESAS is one of the key programmes under the ESS campaign. According to the accreditation criteria of the ESAS, accredited schools have to demonstrate a commitment to continuously implement administrative measures, providing healthy lunches and snacks in accordance with the nutritional requirements stipulated in the "Nutritional Guidelines on Lunch for Students" and the "Nutritional Guidelines on Snacks for Students" of the DH, and organising educational programmes and publicity events to create a nutrition-friendly learning environment for students.

Over 290 primary schools and special schools have participated in the ESAS since its inception. Among them, 132 have attained accreditation, of which 103 have achieved the honour of EatSmart School. The school accreditation is valid for three years. Eight of the accredited schools attained the EatSmart School accreditation for the fifth consecutive time and were presented with the Award for Continuous Promotion of Healthy Eating at School this year. To recognise their efforts, representatives of the Health Promotion Branch (HPB) of the DH visited the schools accredited in the 2023/24 school year in June to present the awards and share tips for creating an environment conducive to healthy eating for students. For details about the ESAS Awards Presentation 2024, please visit school.eatsmart.gov.hk/en/content_esas.aspx?id=6116.

In addition, the campaign's Joyful Fruit Month event and the Salt Reduction Scheme for School Lunches have both received widespread support from stakeholders. In the 2023/24 school year, a record-breaking total of 1 657 kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools participated in the Joyful Fruit Month event. For the Salt Reduction Scheme for School Lunches, 12 participating school lunch suppliers have provided sodium-reduced school lunch options for about 500 primary schools in Hong Kong.

The Head of the HPB of the DH, Dr Leung Yiu-hong, said that schools, parents and lunch suppliers play vital roles in developing healthy eating habits among students, and stakeholders are advised to adopt a low-sodium

eating routine at school and at home cohesively, and encourage students to consume a sufficient amount of vegetables and fruits every day.

Dr Leung added that the support and guidance of the EDB and steering committee members of the campaign over the years have been key to the smooth running of the campaign in the past 18 years. He also expressed his sincere gratitude for the active participation and support of principals, teachers, parents and students from different schools, as well as the co-operation of food suppliers. He appealed to all parties to continue their support for the campaign and help nurture a nutrition-friendly environment of learning and living for students.

More information on the campaign is available at the DH's thematic website (school.eatsmart.gov.hk).



