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Eat healthy to stay healthy

Govt moves to encourage students to avoid junk food; issues directives to schools





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The government has fixed a list of foods for the students of secondary schools across the country and circulated it to all the educational institutes concerned to ensure proper physical and mental development of the young learners.

Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) issued a directive containing the list on Wednesday and sent it out to all secondary schools aiming to discourage students from taking junk foods and encourage them to have healthy meals, said officials.

The directives also asked the school authorities to handover the list of foods to the guardians so that the students can grow a habit of taking healthy foods at home too.

“We have asked all school authorities to handover the list to the shops that sell junk foods at the school gates or adjacent areas and monitor them regularly,” DSHE Director Abdul Mannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Mannan said that a letter signed by him on Wednesday was circulated to the all school head teacher and relevant field-level education officials. “We made the list after taking recommendation from the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science (INFS) at Dhaka University” he said.

The students who eat junk foods like Jhalmuri, Chatpati, Achar and fast foods suffer from various diseases and often miss school, Mannan said.

“If they follow this list, they will have a proper and healthy growth” he added.

INFS, in their proposal, said teenagers usually like to have junk foods. These foods increase the risk of various diseases, including obesity, heart disease, kidney and liver complications, and diabetes.

INFS requested all to keep vegetables of different colours as well as seasonal fruits in the food menu for students.

INFS proposed bread with vegetables, egg, milk or dairy products and seasonal fruits as the breakfast menu for a student. It also recommended keeping rice, small fishes, sea fishes, lentils and vegetables in their lunch menu.

As evening snacks, students may take chicken chop, beguni, daler bora, puffed rice and yoghurt while their dinner meal should include rice or bread, lentils, fish or meat, vegetables and milk, the proposal added.

It also advised students to take two or three seasonal fruits, 300 grams of vegetables, one glass of milk and eight to 10 glasses of water every day, the proposal further read.

Last year, there were some 1,04,75,100 secondary-level students at 20, 465 schools across the country, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Banbeis).

Mannan also said that DSHE on the same day also issued a letter to all school head teachers asking them to distribute books and educational materials among the students who win different competitions.

“We observe authorities of many schools provide crockery as the prize of different competitions and sports”. “We asked them to provide books and other educational materials so that students can develop a habit of reading books outside the textbook”.

In another letter on the day, DSHE ordered the teachers not to smoke or take tobacco products in the school compound.

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