Junk Food should be banned from Schools

Imagine walking into your school canteen and being surrounded by chips, sugary drinks, and candy bars foods that are not only unhealthy but also have long-lasting effects on your health. Junk food is widely available in schools, tempting students with its convenience and taste. However, it's time to ban junk food in school canteens. Not only would this promote healthier eating habits, but it would also reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, and other health issues. By removing junk food, we can ensure that students receive the energy and nutrients they need to thrive academically and physically.

Health problems

Junk food is often packed with unhealthy nutrients like sugar, fat, and salt, which contribute to diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and heart problems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 2 billion people worldwide are considered overweight or obese. Junk food plays a key role in these statistics. Childhood obesity has tripled in the last 30 years, and junk food is one of the main causes. A typical packet of chips contains more salt than a child should eat in an entire day. With increasing rates of obesity, it's crucial to keep junk food away from children to protect their health.

Children’s learning

Consider this: after eating fast food, you feel sluggish and find it hard to focus. A 2018 study in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that children who devour unhealthy foods like fast food or sugary snacks performed worse on memory and attention tasks compared to those with balanced diets. Junk food also leads to low energy, making it harder for students to focus and learn. With more nutritious food, children can concentrate better, which will benefit their academic performance. Schools should prioritize nourishing students for better learning outcomes.

Schools should promote healthy choices

Schools are responsible for shaping the habits and future well-being of students. If junk food is available in school canteens, students are less likely to make healthy food choices. A 2023 study by the Healthy Eating Foundation revealed that when junk food was removed from canteens, students were 25% more likely to choose healthier snacks like fruits and nuts. Providing only healthy options encourages better dietary habits, not just in school, but outside as well. The presence of junk food in schools sends mixed messages — while health lessons advocate for nutritious food, the canteen offers unhealthy alternatives. Schools should promote healthy eating for the long-term benefit of their students.

Junk food can be addictive

Junk food can be surprisingly addictive, much like other substances. Many fast-food companies use chemicals and artificial ingredients that trigger cravings, making it hard for individuals to stop eating. These ingredients, such as monosodium glutamate (MSG), high-fructose corn syrup, and excess salt, stimulate the brain's reward system, encouraging overeating. Studies show that children who consume junk food regularly develop a heightened tolerance to sugary and salty flavours, leading to stronger cravings. In fact, consuming junk food activates the same areas of the brain as drugs or alcohol, leading to dependency-like behaviour. This is especially concerning in schools, where children may develop habits that are hard to break, causing long-term health issues.

The negative effects of junk food on students' health and well-being cannot be ignored. From promoting unhealthy habits that lead to long-term health problems to hindering concentration in class, junk food in schools does more harm than good. Schools have a responsibility to guide students towards healthier choices. By removing junk food from canteens, we can help break the cycle of addiction and promote healthier, more focused students. It is time for schools to prioritize the future health of their students and offer only nutritious options that support their physical and mental growth. Only then can we ensure that students are given the tools to lead healthier, more successful lives.