

# CLOVERLEA SCHOOL

# BRAIN BREAKS



For our LEGENDS to be able to focus and do their best learning, we need to ensure that there are brain breaks in every class. Our LEGENDS understand that brain breaks are stretching and growing their brains. At Cloverlea School, there are 2 types of brain breaks that we refer to in every class. One brain break is when we have a short brain break (also known as an ENERGISER) during work time that helps reduce stress and frustration and increase attention and productivity. Sometimes these are whole class, sometimes individuals go out with a lanyard. The other type of brain break is when our LEGENDS eat something healthy such as fresh vegetables or fruit, yoghurt, crackers, nuts, plain popcorn, sandwiches or cheese. At Cloverlea School, brain breaks are a 5-10 minute break from the task at hand to either have our LEGENDS move their bodies, which will help refocus learning, or have a moment to eat and drink something healthy to help maintain high level brain function.

## IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

We aim to ensure that a short break happens BEFORE fatigue, distraction, or lack of focus sets in for our LEGENDS. The science behind brain breaks clearly shows that when we switch the type of mental activity, we also shift the brains communication to different brain networks which then allows fresh supplies of neurotransmitters. This break allows the brains chemicals to replenish with the resting network, increasing blood flow, sending more oxygen to the brain so that our LEGENDS will be able to function more efficiently and effectively on the learning task they have. By giving our LEGENDS a break from the task at hand they will be re energised and return to their learning more engaged, reducing stress and frustration while increasing attention and productivity.

## CURRICULUM LINKS:

Ensuring we have brain breaks, means our LEGENDS will be able to access more of the teaching and learning programmes in the classroom. Deliberate curriculum links include:

'Managing self' as LEGENDS will keep stress levels down and provide a deliberate time to reset.

'Relating to others' as they will be able to recognise different points of view and share ideas. This helps LEGENDS work effectively together and support each other in coming up with ideas and different ways of thinking.

'Participating and Contributing' links as LEGENDS can feel a sense of belonging and build confidence as they participate and contribute within new contexts.

In Health and Physical Education, a core focus is on the well-being of students themselves, of other people, and of society through learning in health related and movement contexts. Developing a positive, responsible attitude towards their own well-being is a core value. Brain Breaks through Health Promotion helps develop and maintain supportive physical and emotional environments that involve students in personal and collective action.

## RELATIONSHIPS:

Relationships are a critical part of personal development. Brain Breaks enhance relationships by:

building relationships and creating connections as brain breaks provide a social context when LEGENDS are participating in energisers and a social context when eating.

Brain breaks help to develop a culture of wellbeing, by looking after oneself and looking after others, strengthening inclusive ness. Brain break energisers also create fun and laughter which helps alleviate some of the stress some students feel during learning time.

## LINKS TO OUR LEGEND VALUES:

When students show 'Lead' (I know it, do it, show it), they know the reason behind having a brain break, they do it even when they aren't hungry, thirsty or ready to move, and they show the appropriate personal behaviours. Excellence is shown as brain breaks get the brain ready and open for new learning. Being organised is developed because we know when and what we should be eating and drinking to ensure our brain is refuelled as well as understanding the purpose of needing to move, even when we may not feel like it. Being resilient and Determined is shown through eating the correct brain food with the understanding of why and the effects this has on their brain. Having an energiser with movement shows LEGENDS being inclusive as everyone moves together while having fun.

## RESEARCH & EVIDENCE:

Research strongly advocates students being able to "nibble" on brain food and drink water to maintain high-level brain function. "Nibblers" have shown to have better cognitive functioning, fewer social problems, lower cortisol levels, better glucose tolerance, and better maintained insulin levels. (John Joseph - Focus Education "Food for Thought; the Critical Foundation for Brain Care). Brain Breaks for Kids explains the importance of having scheduled brain breaks throughout the day. The article talks about what a successful brain break looks like and the benefits of it. Janet Renee, a registered dietician, says that nutrition and academic performance are linked and that it contributes to emotional and physical wellbeing also.

## HONOURING TE TIRITI O WAITANGI:

Through the New Zealand Curriculum, 'Hauora' is an underlying and independent concept that is a Maori philosophy of well-being that includes the dimensions of taha wairua, taha hinengaro, taha tinana, taha whanau, each one influencing and supporting the others. Our energisers also include te reo and english physical energisers which supports Article 2 in looking after te reo as a taonga. These are carefully selected by staff. Brain breaks that incorporate kai (brain food), include a karakia, showing that we are thankful for the food we have and acknowledging where the food has been grown (Article 4).

He oranga ngākau, he pikinga waiora.

**Ārahi, Kairangi, Nahanaha, Manawaroa, Kotahitanga, Rae Pakari**

**LEAD, EXCELLENCE, ORGANISED, RESILIENCE, INCLUSIVE, DETERMINED**