



## THE BEVERAGE COUNCIL OF IRELAND POSITION PAPER

### SALE OF SOFT DRINKS IN SCHOOLS – VENDING MACHINES

**Ireland's soft drinks sector** is proactively engaged in achieving both healthy lifestyles and school environments. This commitment is demonstrated through a mixture of self-regulation, product innovation and partnerships with Government and other relevant stakeholders.

#### Industry Commitments

The Beverage Council of Ireland (BCI) made a pre-emptive move, before many other European countries, to develop a code on the Sale of Soft Drinks in Schools – Vending. This code is complemented by the industry's code on the marketing and promotion of soft drinks to children. These codes are now encapsulated in the UNESDA<sup>1</sup> commitments which fall under the EU's Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. The soft drinks sector has demonstrated comprehensive compliance with the marketing code, so much so that it has been publicly praised by the former EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, Markos Kyprianou, for its endeavours in this area, during his term. The Soft Drinks Sector endeavors to monitor and adapt to changes within the EU and nationally to ensure proactivity

The code of practice for selling beverages through vending machines is strictly adhered to by BCI members and stipulates that vending machines should not be placed in primary schools. Under the codes, vending machines can only be placed in secondary schools with the prior approval of school management. The key principles set out below are under periodic review to ensure that they remain as relevant as possible to the changing market.

#### Code on the Sale of Soft Drinks in Schools - Key Principles:

- 1) Members will not promote sales via vending machines to children in primary schools;
- 2) Vending machines will only be placed in secondary schools with the approval of school management;
- 3) The location of vending machines within each school will be discussed and agreed with school management;
- 4) Members will offer a wide range of products to satisfy all aspects of a healthy diet;
- 5) Members will encourage school management to select a variety of products to fill the vending machines;
- 6) Members will not offer for sale any super size or king size products in school vending machines;
- 7) Members will not participate in arrangements or promotional activities that encourage over-consumption
- 8) Members will work to develop vending machines with healthy lifestyle imaging and messages;
- 9) Members will respect the classroom as a commercial free zone. However, this should not prevent appropriate programmes that encourage physical activity, academic achievement and positive youth development;
- 10) If requested by school management, members will withdraw vending machines from the school within 10 working days.

#### About the BCI

The BCI is the representative body for the Irish soft drinks sector, covering soft drink, fruit juice and bottled water products. It embodies approximately 60 companies country-wide, which in turn employ about 6,000 people in the manufacture and distribution of non-alcoholic beverages. Every year, the industry sells more than 800 million soft drinks in hundreds of different flavours, shapes and sizes through some 40,000 sales points throughout the country, generating in excess of €200 million in VAT revenue.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESDA is the European industry association representing a substantial part of the total non-alcoholic beverages industry, with 28 national member associations.