

Western School District

Nutrition Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

The Western District schools will provide healthy food choices within the school environment, in accordance with the *Provincial School Food Guidelines*.

The Western School District Nutrition Policy encompasses all foods served or sold to students, 24 hours a day – every day, and at all school-sponsored events, which include, but are not limited to:

- Cafeteria, canteen, vending machines
- Breakfast and snack programs
- School and classroom celebrations
- Meetings
- Student extra-curricular events
- Fundraising activities
- Hosting tournaments, festivals, fairs, and other co-curricular events.

RATIONALE

Nutrition is well recognized for its significant, positive impact on academic performance and students' growth and development. In addition, good nutrition and physical activity facilitate the development of good lifestyle habits that will contribute to students' health and maximize achievement.

Children and youth in Newfoundland and Labrador have the highest overweight and obesity rates in Canada¹. Unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, and obesity are common risk factors of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians experience some of the highest rates of these diseases². Children and youth are developing diabetes³ and the risk factors for heart disease and cancer at a much earlier age^{4,5}.

In addition to obesity and related diseases, other health concerns are related to unhealthy food habits replacing more nutritious foods. For example, soda pop is replacing milk in students' diets and it is important for children and

adolescents to have an adequate calcium intake to reduce the risk of fractures and osteoporosis later in life⁶.

It is important to provide nutritious foods in schools where the meals and snacks consumed can make a major contribution to students' and staffs' total daily consumption of food and nutrients.

PROCEDURES

Schools are encouraged to communicate to all stakeholders and begin discussion on how they will begin to implement the nutrition policy, which has a targeted date for full implementation by September 2008. Schools can utilize the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years as a transition period for communication with all stakeholders and to work with food service providers, with support from the School Health Promotion Consultant.

Administrators are responsible to ensure that services and products provided by catering personnel and other food and beverage suppliers meet the provincial *School Food Guidelines*.

1. Healthier Choices of Foods

The nutrition policy is based on the provincial ***School Food Guidelines*** that emphasize healthier choices of foods and beverages. The guidelines categorize foods into "Serve Most", "Serve Moderately", and "Foods Not Included".

Foods Served and Sold in Schools

1.1 Foods and Beverages served and sold in schools will be selected from the "Serve Most" or "Serve Moderately" foods. (*School Food Guidelines*, pp. 10 -11)

These foods will emphasize:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Lower fat milk products
- Whole grain products
- Lean meats
- Foods prepared with little or no fat
- Foods low in salt, sugar, and caffeine
- Foods high in vitamins and minerals

1.2 Schools are encouraged to serve a variety of healthy meals, which include all of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide, and to ensure the additional daily lunch items are healthy foods.

- 1.3 "Foods Not Included" are foods that are generally low in nutrients and may be high in fat, sugar, salt, caffeine, and/or calories. As these foods do not contribute to a healthy school nutrition environment, they shall not be served or sold in schools. (*School Food Guidelines*, p.13)
- 1.4 Schools will not cook or supply deep fried foods.
- 1.5 All food and beverages in vending machines will be selected from the "Quick Fixes for Healthy Vending Snacks" (*School Food Guidelines*, p. 14). Vending machines will not be used to sell carbonated soft drinks, flavoured milks and water, sweetened juices, fruit drinks with less than 100% juice, sports drinks, or energy drinks.

Beverages

- 1.6 Schools should encourage water consumption by allowing water in classrooms.
- 1.7 Energy drinks are high in caffeine, sugar, and additives. As schools are concerned about their affect on students' behavior and health, these drinks are discouraged on school property.

Classroom Rewards

- 1.8 In instances where schools choose to offer a reward to students or classes for good behaviour, achievement, or participation in fundraising activities, the Western School District encourages schools to offer non-food items or physical activities. If any food is used, it should meet the school food guidelines.

Celebrations

- 1.9 Celebrations, such as birthday parties, Halloween, Christmas, Valentines, Easter, etc., should reflect healthier food choices, use of non-food items, and/or include physical activities.

2. Student Access to Food

The Western School District encourages schools to reduce hunger among children living with food insecurity and to enhance access to healthy foods in a non-stigmatizing manner.

- 2.1 Schools are encouraged to have school breakfast, snack, and milk programs to meet student needs.
- 2.2 If a child does not have a lunch for whatever reason, schools are encouraged to provide the child with healthy foods from an emergency food cupboard or the canteen.

2.3 Schools should offer foods at reasonable prices.

3. Food Safety

3.1 Schools should create a strategy to ensure students wash their hands properly prior to eating.

3.2 Administrators will ensure that caterers, school staff and parent volunteers are familiar with safe food handling practices (School Food Guidelines, pp. 17 - 18). This may require the need for partnership with outside agencies to ensure food safety standards are met.

3.3 When schools provide appropriate equipment (microwaves or warming ovens) to reheat meals that students bring to school from home, care should be taken to ensure this equipment is cleaned and maintained frequently.

3.4 Food allergies should be considered for foods served and brought in to schools, as per the Western School District Anaphylaxis Policy.

4. Environment

Place

4.1 Schools should create a pleasant environment for students to eat. Eating areas (cafeterias, multi-purpose rooms, and classrooms) should be properly cleaned after lunch.

Time

4.2 Schools are encouraged to schedule a recess period at an appropriate interval between start of school day and lunch break.

4.3 Schools should allow a minimum of 20 minutes for students to eat lunch. The lunch break should allow sufficient time to enable students to take part in physical activity before or after eating their meal.

5. Nutrition Education

Curriculum

5.1 The Western School District will work with other partners to develop and enhance health and nutrition curriculum and resources.

5.2 Schools will support opportunities for staff development and training for effective delivery of nutrition curriculum.

- 5.3 When possible, schools should incorporate nutrition education into other subject areas and outside classroom activities.

School Community

- 5.4 Schools should promote activities to positively influence nutrition knowledge, attitudes, skills and eating habits within the whole school community.
- 5.5 Schools will encourage parents and/or guardians to send nutritious meals and snacks to schools.
- 5.6 Teachers, administrators, and other school staff should act as positive role models to promote healthy eating within the school environment, in accordance with the *Provincial School Food Guidelines*.
- 5.7 The Western School District, schools, and school community will support and reinforce messages about healthier eating in schools.

6. Marketing & Promotion

Schools should establish a process to promote and develop a healthy eating environment. Representatives of all school community stakeholders, especially students, should be involved in the process.

Schools should:

- 6.1 Consider developing site-specific guidelines using the Western School District Policy as a framework.
- 6.2 Promote the school food guidelines, make decisions on foods served, and review foods offered.
- 6.3 Create a marketing and promotional plan for nutrition foods. Schools should aim for the theme "The Healthy Choice is the Easy Choice".
- 6.4 Schools are encouraged to price items of less nutritious value to ensure these items cost at least as much as or more than nutritious foods.
- 6.5 Display attractive, current promotional materials related to healthy eating throughout the school.
- 6.6 Ensure advertising, signage and other equipment reflects healthy food choices.

- 6.7 Participate in activities that promote healthy eating and active living.
- 6.8 Acquire current Canadian nutrition material for the school resource center.
- 6.9 Schools should incorporate nutrition information in their home and school communication (e.g. memos, newsletters, websites, etc.).

7. Community Partnerships

- 7.1 Schools are encouraged to partner with local organizations to support their school projects.

Possible contacts to assist schools:

- Businesses
- Service Organizations
- School Council, Home & School Association, Parent and Teacher Association
- Community Recreation Groups
- Public Health Nurse, Dietitian
- School Health Promotion Consultant
- Others, as applicable to school communities

- 7.1. Schools should avail of the Kids Eat Smart Foundation, the School Milk Foundation, and other national or provincial food and nutrition programs.

8. Fundraising

Fundraising activities by schools must emphasize non-food products or healthy food choices from the "Serve Most" or "Serve Moderately" foods within the Provincial *School Food Guidelines*.

Alternative fundraising activities are suggested in the *Healthy Eating School Resource Manual*, Section 3.

¹ Canadian Community Health Survey, Statistics Canada, 2005.

² Achieving Health and Wellness: A provincial wellness plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, Phase 1:2006-2008.

³ Hannon, TS, Rao, G., Arslanian, SA, (2005) Childhood Obesity and type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Pediatrics*. Aug;116(2):473-80.

⁴ Strock, GA, Cottrell, ER, Abang, AE, Buschbacher, RM, Hannon, TS (2005) *J Long Term EFF Med Implants* 15(1):15-32.

⁵ Gascon, F, Valle, M, Martos, R, Zafra, M, Morales, R, Castano, MA (2004) Childhood obesity and hormonal abnormalities associated with cancer risk. *Eur J Cancer Prev*. Jun;13(3):193-7.

⁶ Greer, FR, Krebs, NF, Optimizing Bone Health and Calcium Intakes of Infants, Children, and Adolescents (2006) *Pediatrics* Vol. 117 No. 2 February 2006, pp. 578-585