
NUTRITION HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD ENVIRONMENT

Background

The District supports the maintenance of high standards of food literacy and access to healthy food in schools. While all members of the school community have a role in supporting a healthy food environment, it is the responsibility of each Principal to implement measures to support students to make healthy food choices for themselves, their communities, and their environment. This is to be reflected in sound food literacy programs that enable students to think critically and make informed decisions about how they eat.

Food Literacy

Canada's Dietary Guidelines (2019, often referred to as "the Food Guide") sets out Health Canada's evidence-based guidelines and recommendations for healthy eating.

While good nutrition is vital, it occurs in a broader context of knowledge and skills known as food literacy, the importance of which are emphasized by the *Guidelines*: "Food literacy includes food skills and practices that are learned and used across the lifespan to participate within a complex food environment. Food literacy also means considering the social, cultural, economic, and physical factors related to food." (p.36)

The District expects schools to provide opportunities (such as using school gardens, cooking, field trips, composting activities, etc.) for students to develop sound food literacy and has implemented the Food Literacy Program to support this work. (Please see <https://sd47foodliteracy.com/> for more information about this program and the Healthy Schools BC website, <https://healthyschoolsbc.ca>, for additional resources).

Nutrition

A key component of a healthier school environment is the provision of good nutritional choices amongst the items sold or promoted through the school. The *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools* define the minimum nutrition standard that schools are required to apply to all food and beverages sold to students. This document contains information, tools, and fact sheets to support implementation of the *Guidelines* across the school setting (See Appendix A).

Goals/Principles

1. Supporting a healthier school food environment helps students attain their full potential by providing them with the skills, social support, education, and environmental reinforcement they need to adopt lifelong healthy eating behaviours, and attitudes.
2. All members of the school community have a role to play in supporting a healthy food environment, including school personnel, parents, students, and community stakeholders.
3. Good food literacy equips students with the knowledge and skills they need to make good choices for themselves, their communities, and the environment, and provides a foundation for health and well-being.
4. Healthy eating during childhood and adolescence promotes optimal health and contributes to physical and intellectual development.
5. All students, regardless of social and economic background, have a right to access nutritious food in a dignified and equitable manner.
6. The main purpose of selling foods and beverages in schools is to provide nutrition to students, not for profit generation nor marketing of products.
7. Procuring local foods for public schools is an important element of enabling learners to understand and feel connected through school activities and cross-curricular connections to how and where food is grown, cultivated, and harvested.
8. It is important to work in collaboration with other government departments and stakeholders to create a healthier food environment in schools.

Procedures

1. Healthy Lifestyles District
 - 1.1. The District will continue to support a District Health Committee, comprised of partners important to the health of students, to encourage the implementation of procedures and protocol.
 - 1.2. The District supports providing and modeling healthy food and beverage choices in food offered at school and District meetings.
2. Food Literacy, Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles Curriculum
 - 2.1. The District supports the use of provincially and locally developed curricula, resources, and initiatives related to food literacy nutrition and healthy lifestyles.

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- 2.2. The District supports schools to provide opportunities and encourage students to participate in activities that develop food skills and knowledge, (such as school garden and cooking programs, visits to local farms, etc.), as well as encouraging students to think critically about where their food comes from and the role of food in personal, community and environmental well-being. Support for these activities is provided by the School Food Literacy Program. See <https://sd47foodliteracy.com/> for information.
3. Healthier School Food Environment
 - 3.1 School personnel will create a safe, supervised, pleasant, and positive eating environment, including adequate time and space to eat, and by trusting students to eat according to their appetite.
 - 3.2 School personnel, school community partners, and volunteers will model healthy behaviours and attitudes at school, and during school sponsored and endorsed activities or events, (e.g. using positive messages such as: “eating a variety of foods gives you energy to play and think” rather than: “x food is not healthy.”
 - 3.3 Foods and beverages will not be withheld from students as a consequence. Additionally, foods and beverages will not be offered as an incentive or reward, except when it is justified and documented in the student's Personalized Learning Plan.
 - 3.4 The District encourages schools to work with local vendors to supply locally produced food wherever feasible. In our region it is often possible to find local sources for healthy food options at reasonable prices for meal programs, celebrations, and fundraising. Support with this is available from the District’s Food Literacy Program.
4. Food Services in Schools
 - 4.1. Vending Machine Services:
 - 4.1.1. Generally, vending machines are acceptable in middle and secondary schools.
 - 4.1.2. Parents (PAC), staff and students must be consulted prior to vending machines being installed in schools (present vending machines are grandparented).
 - 4.1.3. Vending machine contracts must be approved by the Superintendent.
 - 4.1.4. Healthy foods and beverages, consistent with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools (2013) at least 50% of food and beverages sold should come from the Sell Most and up to 50% from the Sell Sometimes categories.
 - 4.1.5. Healthy foods and beverages consistent with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools (2013) must be identified prominently on the vending machine (see page 3 of guidelines for Checkmarks System).

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- 4.1.6. “Sell Most” foods and beverages must be priced significantly lower than “sell Sometimes” and “Do Not Sell” items are not to be available in vending machines
 - 4.1.7. Advertising on and in the vicinity of vending machines must support healthy choices.
 - 4.2. Meal Programs, Cafeteria and Canteen Services and access to nutritious foods:
 - 4.2.1. Foods and beverages served must meet Canada's Food Guide as be consistent with the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C Schools.
 - 4.3. Fun Days, Activities and Celebrations:
 - 4.3.1. Food options for such activities should meet the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools (2013) and every effort should be made to include foods and beverages with higher nutritional value.
 - 4.4. Fundraising

Food-based fundraising activities such as hot lunches and bake sales should meet the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools.
5. Partner Groups
- 5.1. Partner groups include:
 - Parents/guardians
 - Parent Advisory Councils
 - District Parent Advisory Council
 - Businesses
 - Community groups and individuals (such as farmers, garden clubs, etc.)
 - Community Recreational service providers
 - Public Health representatives
 - Physicians and other health care practitioners
 - Cities, municipalities, and other local governments
 - 5.2. Principals are encouraged to develop partnerships with service providers to support student healthy lifestyles.
 - 5.3. The District and its schools are encouraged to increase communication between the school and home by providing food, nutrition, and physical activity information. This may be accomplished through:
 - 5.3.1. Regular student newsletters.
 - 5.3.2. Encouraging parents to participate in health-related school activities.
 - 5.3.3. Encouraging parents to keep up to date with Food Literacy Program activity and resources.

Administrative Procedure 164



6. Ongoing Review

- 6.1. The District Health Committee will conduct a biannual review of the implementation of this Administrative Procedure: Nutrition: Healthy School Food Environment.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85 School Act
Health Act
School Regulation 265/89
Canada's Food Guide 2021
Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools
Daily Physical Activity Kindergarten to Grade 12

Adopted: January 28, 1997
Reviewed: January 2007
Revised: May 18, 2022