

# Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services



## Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school food services provide food and drinks which contribute to a supportive, healthy school environment.

## Summary

- A school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle supports learning and health outcomes for children and young people.
- Victorian government schools including primary, secondary, special and language schools, should support a healthy eating culture by developing a healthy school food services and promoting healthy eating principles. Schools should ensure healthy food choices are a major option made available to the school community by their school, and should never supply high sugar content drinks or confectionery.

## Details:

### Background

School food services can have a major impact on the foods and drinks that students are exposed to and consume. Enjoyment of healthy foods and drinks has a wide range of positive benefits for student health and learning outcomes such as:

- Providing important nutrients that students need to be alert and engaged in classroom
- Activities and for healthy physical development and performance
- Supporting the development of healthy eating habits and preferences
- Paving the way for good health and prevention of chronic illness
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It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating and build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods and drinks, and a healthy lifestyle.

A healthy school food service:

- Makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- Offers a variety of nutritious foods
- Promotes foods that are consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines
- Can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- Complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
- Involves students, parents and the wider school community
- Is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment

It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods and drinks, and a healthy lifestyle.

To support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating schools should:

- Work with parents, teachers and students to promote healthy eating practices
- Apply a healthy eating approach to all food and drink services provided to the school community by the school
- Ensure healthy food choices are made available to the school community by their school
- Ensure EVERYDAY food and drinks are always available as the main choices and SELECT CAREFULLY food and drinks are selected carefully and limit the availability of OCCASIONALLY food and drinks. (refer to attached Appendix for these food categories)

Never supply:

- High sugar content drinks such as energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters with high sugar content
- Confectionery such as chocolate, lollies, yoghurt compound and coatings, fudge and chewing gum
- Ensure curriculum programs promote a healthy eating approach

The policy applies to:

- All foods and drinks provided in the following areas within the school environment:
  - School canteens and contracted school food services
  - External businesses and retail food outlets supplying schools (for example, milk bars, cafes and bakeries)
  - Vending machines
  - School curriculum activities
  - Rewards and incentives
  - School sporting days, social events and productions
  - School-based breakfast programs
  - Outside school hours care programs on school grounds

This policy does not apply to:

- Foods and drinks used for the management of individual student's health conditions
- Student lunches and snacks brought from home
- Student birthday celebrations
- Non-school-related events and activities managed by external organisations on school grounds, for example community sport
- School camps

### **Special dietary requirements**

Some students may require special diets for medical reasons. The school food service should try to meet these needs as far as possible so that all children can enjoy eating a healthy lunch from the canteen. Any special needs for children with disabilities such as modified texture diets or wheelchair access to the canteen should also be considered.

The school principal, child's teacher or parents should provide advice of any special dietary

needs to canteen staff.

### **Anaphylactic (severe) food allergy**

Contact with certain foods (such as peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soy bean, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) can be fatal for people with allergies to these foods. The Department has guidelines for schools to support students with anaphylaxis.

Canteen staff need to be aware of students with such allergies and be familiar with the school's management strategies for these students.

### **Role of school council**

Many schools have contractual arrangements in relation to their canteens and while these arrangements need to be honoured, councils should discuss with licensees ways in which canteens can be compliant with Department policy. Schools that have a specific relationship with a retail shop, for example a local milk bar, also need to consider how the policy can be applied.

### **Definitions**

Confectionery can be defined as a small snack, chocolate or lolly – often sized for individual consumption – of minimal nutritional value and with sugar as a main ingredient. Common names for confectionery include lollies, candy or sweets. Confectionery comes in a variety of shapes, textures from jelly-like, soft and chewy to hard and brittle.

### **Role of the canteen and/or other food service**

School canteens and other school food services are important educational resources. They have an important role in the provision of food to students and the school community as well as being an integral part of the school environment.

The school canteen should reflect the educational goals of the school and support and complement student learning. When consumed daily, the food provided through the school canteen may comprise a third of a student's total daily intake and have a significant influence on their health and nutrition.

### **Guiding principles for food selection**

The following principles should inform the selection of foods sold in school food services:

- A range of foods are included from each of the five food groups outlined in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- Fresh food is provided rather than processed
- A range of portion sizes are offered that cater for varying energy use and developmental requirements
- Foods offered reflect the multicultural diversity of the school community

A healthy food service:

- Makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- Offers a variety of nutritious foods
- Promotes foods that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Child and Adolescents in

Australia

- Can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- Complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
- Involves student, parents and the wider school community
- Is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment

Students are encouraged to:

- Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods
- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes, fruits, breads, cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- Include milk, yoghurt, cheese
- Choose water as a drink
- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake
- Choose foods low in salt
- Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars

## **FOOD CATEGORY APPENDIX**

### **Everyday Category (Green)**

Food and drinks in the Everyday category are consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and are most suitable for school food services.

Foods and drinks in the Everyday category are based on the basic food groups and include:

- Breads and cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Dairy foods – reduced or low-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts\* and legumes (dried beans and lentils)
- Water

### **Checklist**

- Include most often as the main choices on the canteen menu
- Make available every day the canteen is open
- Strongly encourage and promote these foods and drinks
- Include as the main choices at school event and activities involving foods and drinks

### **Select Carefully category (Amber)**

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category contain some valuable nutrients but may also include unhealthy ingredients. They are mainly processed foods that have fat, sugar or salt added.

Schools are encouraged to limit the availability of these foods. They should not be promoted at the expense of foods and drinks from the Everyday category.

Foods and drinks in the Select Carefully category include:

- Full-fat dairy foods, low-fat ice-cream

- 100 per cent fruit juices and 100 per cent fruit-juice based ices
- Artificially sweetened drinks
- Reduced-fat processed meats
- Commercially prepared hot foods
- Reduced-fat, high-fibre snack foods
- Margarines, oils, spreads, sauces and gravies

### **Checklist**

- Do not let these foods and drinks dominate the menu
- Avoid large serve sizes
- Reduce the number of these foods on the canteen menu
- Offer these foods only on certain days of the week to limit selling time
- Select healthier choices within the category
- Select choices of these foods that contain fruits and/or vegetables or serve with fruits and/or vegetables
- Do not promote vigorously at the expense of foods and drinks from the Everyday category

### **Occasionally category (Red)**

Foods and drinks in the Occasionally category are not consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and are not recommended for school food services.

Schools should limit the availability of these foods and drinks to no more than two occasions per term.

Foods and drinks in this category include:

- Deep-fried foods
- Pastry-based or crumbed hot foods
- Savoury snack foods – crisps, chips, biscuits
- Ice-creams and ice confections – chocolate-coated and premium ice-creams, icy-poles and ice crushes
- Cakes, muffins, sweet pastries, slices, biscuits and bars
- Cream, butter and copha

The following should never be supplied due to their high sugar content:

- These foods and drinks should not be on the regular canteen menu
- Schools should limit the availability of these foods and drinks to no more than two occasions per term
- These foods and drinks should not regularly be available in other areas of the school such as vending machines.