

SCHOOL FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICY

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| Department responsible : Complementary and Compassionate Services | Approved by : _____ Director general |
| Effective date : October 26, 2022 | Amended : |
| References : | |

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1.1 [basic principles](#) Healthy eating

1. The schools offer a variety of nutritious food in order to contribute to academic achievement, healthy eating habits and healthy development.
2. Country food is promoted and served in the schools and during special activities.
3. Candies, chips and other low nutritional values food are not served in the schools, or only on rare occasions. This also applies for food sold in canteens, fundraising activities and school special events.

Beverage

4. Water is the main beverage and is easily accessible for children, ideally in each classroom.
5. Pop and other sugary beverages (e.g., fruit punch, energy drinks, sport drinks, iced coffee) are not served or sold in the schools and students are encouraged not to bring these to school.
6. 100% pure fruit juice is served only occasionally and in small quantities.

General good practices for snacks and meals

7. Students are included in food preparation when possible, including preparing country food.
8. Students decide on the quantity of food they eat. They are encouraged to be mindful of their hunger cues and stop eating when they feel full.
9. Food are not used as a reward (e.g., candy for good behaviour).



10. Everyone is equally encouraged to eat healthy food, no matter their body shape or weight.
11. Staff are encouraged to be healthy role models for the students.
12. Meals and snacks for children with allergies are managed individually as the need arises.
13. Efforts are made to reduce waste associated with meal and snack programs.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 [definitions](#) **Healthy eating**

1. The schools offer a variety of nutritious food in order to contribute to academic achievement, healthy eating habits and healthy development.

Offering healthy food on a regular basis to school-age children will help them to stay mentally focussed in school and will encourage them to develop healthy eating habits. Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (KI) and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) recommend that almost all food offered in the schools be nutritious food. This includes food served for breakfast, lunch, snacks and during special events (e.g., sports competitions). This policy also applies to food used in cooking activities and sold in canteens or for fundraising.

- Any food from the [Canada's Food Guide](#) and [Nunavik Food Guide](#) can be served every day. This includes fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, grains (e.g., bread, low-sugar breakfast cereals) and protein sources (e.g., eggs, cheese, yogurt, milk, meat, fish). You can encourage students to try new healthy foods by keeping a positive attitude, setting an example and not forcing them.
- Some foods have a higher content of sugar and/or unhealthy fat, or they don't have a lot of nutrients. Here are few examples: cream cheese, Nutella®-type spreads, low-fiber breakfast cereal such as Rice Krispies, waffles, croissants, popcorn and homemade sugary cake (from scratch). These foods can be served in school, but less often. For example, one or two of those less healthy options could be served once or twice a week.

Consult Tool #1 in Appendix A to know more about which foods to limit in school.



- Low nutritional values food, such as candies, chips and fries, should not be served in school. Each school can decide on a few events during the year where such foods could be served (e.g., Halloween, Christmas, end-of-year picnic).

Consult the tools in Appendices to know more about healthy-food options in schools.

2. Country food is promoted and served in the schools and during special activities.

All country food is healthy. Schools are encouraged to conclude agreements with hunters or country-food/harvesting programs in their community in order to obtain country food on a regular basis.

Some ideas to include more country food at school:

- Organize more traditional activities involving country food (e.g., butchering a seal, preparing ptarmigan and geese, gut and fillet Arctic char).
- Include country foods in snacks and meals (fresh or frozen berries, meat (dried, fresh or cooked), prepare *uarutilik* or *suvalik* with students).
- Serve bannock (made from a mix of white flour and whole-wheat flour and canola oil).
- Make more recipes with country foods such as sushi with Arctic char or stews with caribou.

3. Candies, chips and other low nutritional values food are not served in the schools, or only on rare occasions. This also applies for food sold in canteens, fundraising activities and school special events.

Schools have an important role to play in creating a healthy environment in order to contribute to the health and well-being of the students. They need to lead by example by offering healthy, nutritious food most of the time and also by encouraging the school staff to be positive role models when they are with the students. Children and youth spend much of their time in school. Improving the types of food offered in the school environment will make it easier for them to eat healthy food on a regular basis. In addition, food habits that are developed during childhood have good chances to be maintained in adulthood.



Therefore, KI and the NRBHSS recommend not serving or selling low nutritional values food as chips & candies in schools. Each school can decide on a few events during the year where those foods could be served (e.g., Halloween, Christmas, end-of-year picnic). These foods typically have a very low nutritional value and are very high in sugar, fat or salt. It is important to take the time to explain to student why certain foods are served more often and some are not served at school, but not to categorize food as “good” or “bad.”

Consult the tools in Appendices to help you identify the food items to limit and avoid serving in schools.

Few additional tips for schools:

- Birthday celebration: Offer healthier options. Commercial cakes could be replaced by homemade muffins or banana bread with low sugar. You can also gather all the birthdays of the month and organize one single celebration.
- Fundraising: Organize fundraising activities without food or with healthy homemade meals (e.g., spaghetti, sushi, etc.).

Schools are encouraged to hold open discussions with students and parents about low nutritional values food including pop and other sugary beverages that are brought from outside the school. Teachers and school staff need to be very careful and exercise judgement when taking action or making rules about food from outside school since those foods could be the only meal a student has. For instance, a school could decide to ban pop, energy drinks and candies only. If a student brings fast foods food such as fried chicken with fries, chips, etc., school staff could offer him/her fruit, vegetables or yogurt to complete his/her meal.

Beverages

4. Water is the main beverage and is easily accessible for children, ideally in each classroom.

Water will be promoted as the best choice of drink in schools and should be accessible at all times for students. By encouraging water, schools will contribute to proper hydration and will reduce consumption of pop and other sugary beverages among students, which will contribute to improved concentration of the students in class.



Here are a few measures to promote water in schools:

- Allow water bottles in class.
- Have a sufficient number of water dispensers. They should be easily accessible, attractive, clean and in good condition.
- Organize activities promoting water as drink of choice in the school.
- Keep the parents informed and involved.

5. Pop and other sugary beverages (e.g., fruit punch, energy drink, sports drink, flavored milk, iced coffee) are not served or sold in the school. Students are also encouraged not to bring those beverages to school.

Drinking sugary beverages has been associated with a higher risk of being overweight and developing type II diabetes. They contain a lot of sugar and do not contribute to satiety. They can also contribute to tooth decay. Children and youth in Nunavik consume large amounts of sugary beverages. By encouraging students not to bring sugary beverages to school and by making only healthy beverages available, schools will support students in making healthier beverage choices.

6. 100% pure juice is served only occasionally and in small quantities.

The knowledge about 100% juice has progressed in the last few years and it is now considered as a sugary beverage like pop. Even if the sugar comes from natural sources, juice was found to contain the same kind of sugars (glucose and fructose) and in similar quantities as other sugary beverages. It is now known that 100% fruit juice has the same negative health impacts as other sugary beverages. This is why KI and the NRBHSS recommend that the schools serve 100% fruit juice only occasionally and in small quantities (125 mL per day).

Good practices during mealtime

7. Students are included in food preparation when possible, including preparation of country food.

Involve students in preparing meals and snacks when possible. This can contribute to their self-esteem and teach them team work and some food-preparation skills.



Children will also be more willing to taste new foods or dishes if they take part in cooking.

Organizing regular opportunities to prepare country food is also very important to encourage children and youth to integrate these foods into their diet and become more skilled in preparing them.

In addition, involving students in growing projects (e.g., sprouting, maintaining small growing systems) can encourage them to taste new vegetables and fruits and integrate those foods into their diet.

8. Students decide on the quantity of food they eat. They are encouraged to be mindful of their hunger and satiety clues.

It is a good practice to offer breakfasts and snacks to all children to avoid stigmatization (namely putting a spotlight on children who may have less food at home). However, children should be encouraged to be mindful of their hunger and satiety clues and to refuse food if they are not hungry because they already ate at home.

Serve reasonable portions at first and encourage children to eat slowly. If children ask for more, you can serve another small portion or offer them a fruit. Again, encourage children to be mindful of their hunger and satiety clues. Remind them that it can take 20 minutes before the brain receives information that the stomach is full.

9. Food is not used as a reward in schools (e.g., candy for good behaviour).

Using food to reward children is associated with a greater preference for foods high in sugar and unhealthy fats (precisely the types often used as a reward). In addition, using food as a reward or punishment can lead to issues with food in adulthood such as binge eating or restricted eating. It is a better option to offer non-food items (e.g., pencils, stickers, special permission, etc.) as rewards.

However, sharing a healthy meal with students and teachers to have a fun and positive time together is encouraged (e.g., special sushi or homemade pizza lunch in class to reward students for their good behaviour).



10. Everyone is encouraged to eat healthy food, no matter their body shape or weight.

Having a negative body image can lead to disrupted eating patterns, low self-esteem and depression. It is important for school staff to avoid comments on body shape, or how certain foods could affect body weight. Everyone in the school should be encouraged to eat healthy food. The guidelines in this policy apply to all no matter their body shape or weight, unless a health professional gives specific recommendations and advice to follow for a child.

11. School staff are encouraged to be healthy role models for the students

School staff, especially teachers, can influence students through their behaviors and their words. They are encouraged to be role models for the children when they are at the school with the students.

Here are a few examples of actions that can have a positive influence on students:

- Drink water when you are with your students.
- Share healthy foods with your students in a fun and positive context when possible (e.g. have a special country food lunch, prepare a fruit salad with the students for snack, etc)
- Talk positively about country food, healthy store bough food and healthy beverage choices served in school.

12. Meals and snacks for children with allergies are managed individually as the need arises.

Management of allergies should be considered as a shared responsibility between the children, his/her parents and the school. Here are some of the best practices to manage food allergies in schools in order to reduce the risk of allergen exposure when a child has a food allergy:

- All students should wash their hands before and after meals. They should be reminded not to share food, drinks, containers, utensils or water bottles.
- Tables should be cleaned before and after meals and snack times.
- Children with allergies should have a designated space for meals and snacks without being isolated from other students. Make sure the children use separate placemats, dishes, utensils and glasses.



- School staff should be informed appropriately when a child has a food allergy. Collaboration with the parents is important to be able to identify what can be served to this child and what can't.
- The school must have a protocol to follow in case of severe allergies and have access to epinephrine auto-injectors at school.

Schools can always contact the NRBHSS by email at FoodSecurity.Nrbhss@ssss.gouv.qc.ca if they need any support related to the management of food allergies.

13. Efforts are made to reduce waste associated with meal and snack programs.

We encourage schools to make efforts to reduce waste by having dedicated staff keep an inventory of the food and adjusting food orders to consumption levels. Also, try to reduce single-portion packaging and use reusable cutlery and dishes.



APPENDIX A'

Tool #1: Food items to serve most often and to limit/avoid in schools

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Serve most often | Serve less often in school E.g., once or twice a week, 1-2 items on this list could be served These foods and beverages have a higher content of sugar and/or unhealthy fat or don't have a lot of nutrients. | Should not be served in schools, or only a few times during the school year for special occasions (e.g., Halloween, Christmas, Easter, end-of-year picnic) |
| Any food from the new Canada's food guide and the Nunavik food guide, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables Grain products, ideally whole grain: bread, low-sugar and whole-grain breakfast cereal (see tool #2), pasta, bannock made with canola oil Protein: eggs, cheese, yogurt, milk, meat, beans, fish Other good choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit puree (with no sugar added) Canned fruits in their own juice/water Homemade muffins, banana bread and oatmeal cookies made with whole wheat flour, with a fair amount of sugar and fat (not from a store-bought mix) Granola bars, low in sugar (see tool #2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sugary or refined, low-fibre cereals and granola bars (see tool #2) Pastries (croissants) Store-bought muffin mix Pancakes and waffles Bacon, sausages, pepperoni, luncheon meat and baloney Meat jerky (store-bought) Cheese spread and process cheese slices Cream cheese Nutella®-type spreads (contain unhealthy fat and very little protein), jam, syrup Bannock made with lard or shortening Popcorn Homemade sugary cake 100% juice (serving of 125 ml) - refer to point 6 | Candies and chocolate bars Pop and other sugary drinks (e.g., fruit punch, sports drink, energy drink, flavored milk, iced coffee) Store-bought cake and cake mix Chips Hot dogs/Pogos French fries and other fried foods Frozen fast-food meals (e.g., frozen pizza) Any food that has sugar as the first ingredient on the list Any deep-fried food |

Tool #2: Make healthy food choices for breakfast, lunch and snacks

Breakfast

A balanced breakfast will improve concentration in class and will prevent cravings later during the day.

Breakfast Club of Canada provides healthy and balanced breakfasts. For the schools running their own breakfast club, we encourage them to:

- offer a balanced breakfast at the beginning of the day or during the morning including grains (preferably whole grains), protein-rich foods and fresh/frozen berries and fruits (based on the [Nunavik Food Guide](#) and the new [Canada's food guide](#) recommendations);
- choose food with high nutritional content, little added sugar and few additives and unhealthy fats.

Tips for berries and fruits

- Fresh or frozen berries and fruits are the best choices.
- Canned fruits in their own juice/water and apple sauce without sugar added are good alternatives.
- Encourage students **to make water the drink of choice**. Serve juice less often and choose 100% pure fruit juice. When serving, offer small quantities (½ cup) at a time.

Tips for grains

- Serve whole-grain bread more often.
- Choose whole-grain cereals and granola bars with low sugar (see Tables I and II).
- When baking (e.g., muffins, pancakes, bannock), use whole-wheat flour more often, or half white flour, half wheat flour.

Ideas for protein-rich breakfast foods

- Natural peanut or nut butter
- Soy butter (Wow® butter type) if some children are allergic to peanuts or nuts in your school
- Boiled or scrambled eggs
- Cheese or yogurt
- Milk
- Fortified soy beverage
- Plain canned beans (e.g., with scrambled eggs, cheese and tortillas to make a morning burrito)
- Sliced meats (ham, turkey, chicken)



Lunches

Children who didn't eat at lunch time can be provided with simple, healthy meal options to help them stay focussed and learn better in the afternoon.

Some ideas:

- Egg, tuna or ham-and-cheese sandwiches or wraps with vegetables on the side
- Grilled cheese with a fruit
- Crackers, cheese, boiled eggs or hummus and vegetables on the side
- Simple healthy meals (if staff permit):
 - beef, vegetable and tomato macaroni
 - chicken with rice and vegetables
 - Beef tacos with cheese, tomatoes and salad
 - Chili with cheese

Snacks

Growing schoolchildren need nutritious snacks.

Snack ideas:

- Fresh or frozen berries and fruits
- Pitsik, nikku or homemade jerky
- Frozen fish or caribou
- Suvalik (using canola oil or seal fat)
- Vegetables and dip
- Dried fruits
- Cheese or yogourt
- Granola bars (see Table II)
- Cereal and milk (see tables)
- Canned fish with crackers



APPENDIX B

****Important: Be careful and read food labels to choose nut- and peanut-free cereals if children in your school have allergies****

| | Excellent choices for schools | Good choices for schools | Not recommended for serving on a regular basis in schools |
|--|---|---|--|
| Cereals (brand examples) | At least 3 g of fibre and no more than 7 g of sugar per portion (30 g); ≥ 25% of recommended daily intake for iron | At least 2 g of fibre and no more than 10 g of sugar per portion (30 g); at least 15% of recommended daily intake for iron | Less than 2 g of fibre and/or more than 10 g of sugar per portion (30 g) |
| Multigrain Cheerios | X | | |
| Original Mini Wheats | X | | |
| Raisin Bran | X | | |
| Multigrain Life | X | | |
| Shreddies | X | | |
| Original Cheerios | | X | |
| Oatmeal Crisp Almond | | X | |
| Honey Bunches of Oats | | X | |
| Muslix cereal (maple, grape or nut) | | X | |
| Kellogg® Just Right | | X | |
| Quaker® Squares Oatmeal | | X | |
| Original Quaker® Life | | X | |
| Mini Wheats (brown sugar, strawberry or raspberry) | | X | |
| Vector cereal dietary supplement | | X | |
| Special K (red berry or granola low fat) | | X | |
| Rice Krispies | | | X |
| Corn Flakes | | | X |
| Fruits Loops, Corn Pops, Lucky Charms or Honeycomb | | | X |

Nutritional guide for choosing granola bars served in schools

****Important:** Be careful and read food labels to choose nut- and peanut-free granola bars if children in your school have allergies**

| | Good choices for schools | | Not recommended for serving on a regular basis in schools |
|--|---|---|--|
| Granola bar (brand examples) | Any brand with 7 g of sugar maximum; 2 g or more of fibre; less than 1 g of saturated fat ("bad" fat) per portion (= one bar); no sweeteners | Any brand with 10 g of sugar maximum; 2 g or more of fibre; less than 1 g of saturated fat ("bad" fat) per portion; no sweeteners | Any brand that doesn't meet nutritional criteria in the two other categories |
| Kashi Chewy Bar trail mix | X | | |
| Nature Valley field berry mix bar N. | X | | |
| Nature Valley berry granola bar lunch box | X | | |
| Nature Valley chewy fruit & nut bars | X | | |
| Nature Valley chocolate chip bar lunch box | X | | |
| Nature Valley peanut butter crunchy bar | X | | |
| Selection cereal bar (raspberry or strawberry) | | X | |
| Clif bars | | | X |
| Quaker Chewy Bar | | | X |
| Quaker Chewy Bar Yogurt | | | X |
| Quaker Granola Bar Chocolate Fudge Dipp | | | X |