

Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Schools

*A Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy
for Nova Scotia Public Schools*



Consultation Draft
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A Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools

Executive Summary

The *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* outlines standards for foods and beverages served and sold by Nova Scotia public schools. In addition, it promotes nutrition education in the curriculum, encourages community partnerships, and is supportive of a positive learning environment for students, staff, and the community.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools is to increase student and staff access to and enjoyment of health promoting, safe, and affordable food and beverages, served and sold by Nova Scotia Public Schools.

The goal is to make the healthy choice the easiest choice for students and staff in the school setting.

Healthy foods and active lifestyles are important during the school age years. Children and youth need healthy foods to learn, grow and develop into healthy productive adults. In Nova Scotia, there is concern about poor eating habits, increasing rates of overweight and obesity, and the high level of inactivity in children and youth. Left unchecked, this situation presents both short- and long-term poor health consequences that begin during the school age years and continue to adulthood.

By practising healthy behaviours at school, staff maintain and improve their health and well-being, and also act as role models for students. Schools have an important role to play in positively influencing students' food choices and eating habits, as well as increasing opportunities for physical activity during the school day.

In September 2004, the Department of Education established a Food and Nutrition in Nova Scotia Schools Policy Workgroup, tasked with developing the draft policy framework and guidelines. Membership included representatives of Nova Scotia Health Promotion, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the eight provincial school boards, administrators, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations, La Fédération des parents acadiens de la Nouvelle Écosse, the Annapolis Valley Health Promoting School Project, the Cumberland County School Food Project, and Public Health staff. These, as well as other partners, continue to work with the Department of Education to make schools health promoting learning environments for students.

The Department of Education and its partners believe that schools can play an important role in influencing students' food choices and eating habits, as well as increasing opportunities for physical activity, and that healthy eating and active living, as part of Health Promoting Schools programs, are important investments in children and youth. The *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* is part of integrated and comprehensive plans for healthy living for young Nova Scotians. *Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together* (2005), *Blueprint for Building a Better*

Nova Scotia (2003), and *Healthy Eating Nova Scotia* (2005) illustrate government's commitment to work with school boards, parents, caregivers, and other key stakeholders to implement health-promoting policies and programs for the school age population.

The issues related to poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity among the school age population are as multifaceted as the solutions. Addressing these issues is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders. Government, non-government, and community partners continue to work with school boards, schools, parents, and students to provide support, resources, and leadership. Continued collaboration will be key to the implementation of the *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools*.

“I see my job as producing young healthy citizens. This goes beyond academics. A secure, healthy environment supporting physical activity, healthy eating, and emotional well-being needs to be created alongside [academics]. Academic achievement cannot happen without these.”

--Junior High School Principal

From: *Food and Nutrition in Nova Scotia Schools*
An Environmental Scan of Key School Informants
Nova Scotia Health Promotion, June 2004

Purpose and Goal of the Policy

The purpose of the *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* is to increase student and staff access to and enjoyment of health promoting, safe, and affordable food and beverages, served and sold by Nova Scotia Public Schools.

The goal is to help make the healthy choice the easiest choice for students and staff in Nova Scotia Public Schools.

The policy will contribute to nutrition-related health and education outcomes for children and youth.

As with all Department of Education policies, and in recognition of the multiculturalism that defines the country and province, the *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* respects diverse customs and beliefs.

Introduction

Eating well, being active and making appropriate choices for health takes more than willpower.

Nutrition policies and programs supportive of healthy choices for the entire school community--students, staff, volunteers and their families--can help ensure that the healthy choice is the easiest choice to make in school settings.

School food and nutrition policies can help make the healthy choice the easy choice during the school day!

The *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* outlines standards for foods and beverages served and sold by Nova Scotia schools. It also helps promote nutrition education in the curriculum, encourages community partnerships, and supports a positive learning environment for students, staff and the community. Learning about nutrition in the classroom is most effective when it is reinforced with a health promoting environment that provides opportunities for students to practise what they learn.

Background

Healthy foods and active lifestyles are important during the school age years.

Children and youth need healthy foods to grow, learn, be active, and develop into healthy, productive adults.

Schools have an important role to play in positively influencing students' food choices and intakes. Students have access to food and beverages from many different environments including home, schools, and the larger community in which

they live, learn, work, and play. The food experiences provided by various environments, in addition to influential media messages, work together to shape the eating habits and preferences of children and youth. Given the amount of time children spend in school, it is not surprising that parents, children, communities, schools, and government departments recognize the school environment as one that significantly influences students' food choices and intakes (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997; Health Canada, 1997; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996; American Dietetic Association, et al. 2003).

Nutrition, health, and learning are linked. Schools play a crucial role in preparing students for the future. There is much research confirming what most educators have known for some time: that health, nutrition, and learning are linked. Healthy food choices and practices are linked to learning readiness and academic achievement, decreased discipline problems, and decreased emotional problems (American Dietetic Association et al., 2003; Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, 1998; Russell, 2004). Research validates the positive impact of school breakfasts on student performance (Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, 1998; Pollitt, 1995; Powell et al., 1998; Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning, 1998). In the short term, missing even one meal can affect behaviour and ability to learn. On a continuous basis, poor nutrition affects motivation, alertness, attentiveness, and emotional expression (Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy 1998; Action for Healthy Kids, 2005).

Healthy food choices and practices are linked to learning readiness and academic achievement, decreased discipline problems and decreased emotional problems.

Studies also demonstrate the positive effects of daily physical activity on student performance and academic achievement in terms of memory, observation, problem-solving and decision-making, as well as contributing to significant improvements in attitudes, discipline, behaviours, and creativity (Symons, 1997, Dwyer et al., 1996; Etnier et al., 1997; Shepard, 1997; Keays et al., 1995; Calfas and Taylor, 1994).

Students benefit from having healthy school staff. There is strong evidence that young people take on behaviours like those they see practised by the role models in their lives (Health Canada and Government of Ontario, 2005). By encouraging and practising healthy behaviours at school, administrators, teachers, and other staff not only maintain and improve their own health and well-being, but also become role models for students. Students benefit from having healthy teachers because their teachers are more energetic and absent less often (Marx et al., 1998; Symons et al., 1994).

Healthy eating and physical activity can help reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases. There is much research to show that healthy eating helps protect against heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, hypertension, dental decay, and certain cancers (World Health Organization, 2003).

In Nova Scotia, three diet-related diseases—heart disease, stroke and diabetes—are alone responsible for nearly half of all deaths in the province (Colman, 2002). For

the first time in history, Nova Scotia is seeing an increase in the rates of Type 2 diabetes in children and adolescents. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 16 to 18% of newly diagnosed cases among those under the age of 19 years. Type 2 diabetes, which used to be referred to as adult onset diabetes, was virtually unreported in children and youth in the early 1990s. (Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia, 2003; Diabetes Care Program of Nova Scotia, 2004).

For the first time in history we are seeing youth with chronic diseases like Type 2 diabetes and hypertension, traditionally diagnosed in individuals during the late adult years.

The increased rates of overweight and inactivity are among the greatest health concerns for children and youth.

There is much concern about the health and rising rates of obesity in children in Nova Scotia and elsewhere. The rates of overweight and obesity have nearly tripled for Canadian children of both genders (Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2004; Tremblay & Willms, 2000). Children who are overweight are at increased risk of becoming obese adults and are at higher risk of early adult diseases and death (Guo and Chumlea, 1999).

If no improvements are made to weights and eating and activity habits, this generation of adults may actually enjoy better quality of life and longer life spans than their own children!

There is also concern about the poor levels of physical activity in Nova Scotia children and youth. A study of activity rates of Nova Scotia children and youth found that throughout the province, physical activity decreased from childhood to adolescence for both genders (Campagna et al., 2002).

- In 2004, 26% of Canadian children and adolescents aged 2 to 17 years were overweight or obese; 8% were obese (Statistics Canada, CCHS, 2004).
- In 2004, the combined overweight/obesity rate of 2-17 year olds was significantly above the national level in Nova Scotia at 32%; 9.4% were obese (Statistics Canada, CCHS, 2004).

- By grade 11 only 8.7% of males and 5.1% of females accumulated the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity compared with 90% of males and 92.3% of females in grade 3 (Campagna, et al., 2002).

The eating habits of Nova Scotia children and youth are cause for concern. Poor nutrition results in both short term effects (e.g. impaired concentration and difficulty learning) as well as longer term consequences (e.g. obesity, chronic diseases). A 2003 study of 5200 grade 5 students from across Nova Scotia concluded that dietary intake among children in Nova Scotia was relatively poor. In addition, skipping meals and purchasing meals at school or fast-food restaurants were significant determinants of poor diet (Veugelers et al., 2005).

Percentage of grade 5 children in Nova Scotia who did not meet Canada's Food Guide Recommendations for food group servings:

- Milk Products 42.3%
- Vegetables & Fruit 49.9%
- Grain Products 54.4%
- Meat & Alternatives 73.7%

(Veugelers et al., 2005)

Studies also indicate that 31% of elementary school and 62% of secondary school students do not eat breakfast daily (Breakfast for Learning, 2004). Children and adolescents who eat breakfast generally have a more nutritious diet and are more able to meet nutrient recommendations. Those who do not eat breakfast are unable to make up for nutrient deficits over the course of the day (Rampersaud, et al., 2005).

Staff benefit from having access to healthy eating in the school workplace.

Canadians spend 60% of their waking hours at work and often eat one or more meals and snacks at work. The availability of healthy food choices in the workplace influences how people eat. Having access to healthy food during the work day provides opportunities for school staff to choose health promoting foods that can, in the short term, maintain energy levels and concentration, and in the longer term reduce the risk of developing nutrition related chronic diseases (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2002; County of Lambton Community Health Services Department, 2004).

Poverty influences the ability to make healthy food choices. Nutritional health depends largely on the food and beverage choices made. The ability to make healthy food choices requires knowledge of food choices, cooking skills, time for food preparation, and sufficient income to buy nutritious foods, among other factors. Research in Nova Scotia in 2003-2004 conducted by the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre shows that people who live in poverty cannot afford to eat a nutritious diet no matter how carefully they choose and prepare foods. For these people, very few food 'choices' are available. The latest figures suggest that 15.8% of Nova Scotians live in poverty, with the rate of poverty among families headed by single mothers being an alarming 48.8% (Healthy Eating Nova Scotia, 2005).

Poverty limits the ability of parents to provide nutritious foods to their children and help them develop sound eating habits. Evidence suggests that the income-related inability to access food is growing among Nova Scotia children.

- 1 in 5 children in Nova Scotia live in poverty.

(Raven et al., 2004)

Food and beverages served and sold by schools should be for the purposes of nourishment rather than for revenue generation.

All students need healthy foods during the school day to sustain the energy and concentration required for learning. In the school setting, all students should be able to access required nourishment through the channels provided by the school. Given the rates of poverty in Nova Scotia, it is important that the food and beverages sold, are priced so that students can afford to purchase them.

The school is but one setting that serves and sells food and beverages to children, youth, and staff during the day. Foods of limited or no nutritional value can be part of a healthy pattern of eating and can add enjoyment to eating when consumed in moderation. Students and staff have ample opportunity to choose a variety of food

and beverages—both healthy and those of limited nutritional value—in the many other settings they frequent (e.g. home, child care centres, recreation centres, retail establishments, clubs, restaurants, playgrounds, parks). Parents and caregivers will be better able to guide and support children and youth in enjoying a healthy pattern of eating, knowing that what is served and sold in the schools is healthy.

The Department of Education and its partners believe that nutrition and physical activity, as part of Health Promoting School programs, are important investments in children and youth.

The *Comprehensive Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools* is part of integrated and comprehensive plans for health promotion and chronic disease prevention for Nova Scotia children and youth.

School health, including nutrition, is an important investment in children and youth.

Health Promoting Schools (HPS), also known as Comprehensive School Health (CSH), is an approach to school based health promotion involving a broad spectrum of programs, activities, and services that take place in schools and their surrounding communities. HPS integrates health instruction; social supports and partnerships from the broader school community; and creates supportive environments based on health promoting plans and policies. Such actions are designed to evolve and constantly strengthen the school

A study published in the American Journal of Public Health indicates that students in Nova Scotia schools with a comprehensive healthy living program had significantly lower rates of overweight and obesity, had healthier diets and reported more physical activity than students in schools without such a program (Veugelers & Fitzgerald, 2005).

community as a healthy setting for learning, playing, working and living (Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 2005; World Health Organization, 2005). The HPS approach helps prepare students for a life of health and learning.

Healthy Eating Nova Scotia outlines a strategic plan to address nutrition-related health issues in the province. One of the four priority areas is children and youth, and includes increasing the availability and affordability of healthy foods in school among other settings, and increasing the knowledge about food and nutrition among parents, teachers, and caregivers (Healthy Eating Nova Scotia, 2005).

Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together (2005), *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia* (2003), *Healthy Eating Nova Scotia* (2005), *Active Kids, Healthy Kids* (2002) and the *Nova Scotia Tobacco Strategy* (2001) illustrate government's commitment to work with school boards, parents, caregivers, and other key stakeholders on health-promoting policies and programs for the school age population.

Partnerships are key to school food and nutrition policies and programs.

Partnerships and shared responsibilities among all levels of school stakeholders are needed to

Schools cannot do it alone! Partnerships are key to meeting the task of raising healthy, active children and youth who are ready to learn.

meet the task of raising healthy, active children and youth who are ready to learn. The Department of Education is working collaboratively with many partners including Nova Scotia Health Promotion, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, students, public health, and the larger community to make schools health-promoting, learning environments.

Policy

The policy is divided into the following sections: A) Access to Food, B) Quality of Food Served and Sold by Schools, and C) Nutrition Education.

A. Access to Food

All students need healthy foods during the school day to sustain the energy and concentration required for learning.

i. Food and Beverage Choices

Providing a variety of healthy, acceptable food and beverage options for students and staff reinforces the nutrition curriculum taught in the classroom. Students and staff have opportunity to choose less nutritious food and beverages outside of the school setting. This policy, therefore, promotes the serving and selling of healthy food choices by the school.

- All schools will serve or sell a variety of healthy food and beverage choices as outlined by the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** (See Appendix 1)
- Students should be involved in the planning of school food menus and choices.

ii. Programming

Food programs can help ensure that all students have access to healthy, affordable foods during the school day.

- It is expected that all schools will participate in the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' School Milk Program (See Appendix X)
- Schools are encouraged to provide food programs such as breakfast, recess, and lunch that will be available to all students but not be promoted as a replacement for meals eaten at home.
- Breakfast programs are to follow standards outlined by Nova Scotia Health Promotion and the Department of Education (NOTE: in process) and reflect best practices from Breakfast for Learning (See Appendix X).

iii. Pricing

The cost of food and beverages influences whether or not they are chosen. Food and beverages are sold in school primarily for the purposes of providing nutrition rather than for revenue generation.

- Schools will implement pricing on a cost recovery basis to ensure foods and beverages are as accessible as possible to students.

iv. Promotion & Advertising

The business world is keenly aware of the potential to build preferences and cultivate brand loyalty by targeting schools that house a captive and impressionable audience of future consumers (Nestle, 2002; Media Awareness Network, 2003^{a,b}). Partnerships between schools and businesses can be mutually beneficial. However, such

partnerships work best when designed to meet identified educational needs rather than commercial motives.

Schools will work to develop a culture and environment that supports health by:

- Promoting healthy food and beverage choices that are consistent with the **“Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily” list of Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** (Appendix 1).
- Displaying attractive, current promotional materials related to healthy eating and active living throughout the school (e.g. posters, displays).
- Giving priority space to healthy food and beverage items as defined by the **“Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily” list of the Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools**, e.g. counter top refrigerators, placement of fruits and vegetables at student eye level.

v. Time to Eat

Enjoying meals with others is an important component of healthy eating (Conklin, et al, 2002). The human brain requires approximately 20 minutes to register satiety. Research also indicates that students need about the same amount of time to consume a meal. Allowing students and staff a minimum of 20 minutes to eat lunch provides a break in routine and restores energy and enthusiasm for afternoon classes. There is research to indicate that younger grades benefit from a 10-minute snack during the school day (Ref.)

- It is recommended that the school day be scheduled to allow students and staff adequate time to eat lunch, with a suggested time of 20 minutes.
- It is recommended that students be given a 10-minute break to eat a snack, scheduled separately from recess.
- Activities (e.g. intramurals, clubs) should not be scheduled so they compete with lunch and snack times.
- School schedules should recognize that students need nourishment every 3 to 4 hours, based upon the time they would have last had opportunity to eat (Refer to Appendix for sample meal/snack schedules).
- Schools will endeavour to create an atmosphere where staff and students are encouraged to enjoy scheduled meal breaks.

vi. Food Packaging and Environmental Consciousness

Schools in Nova Scotia have done a wonderful job partnering with and educating the community about how to be environmentally conscious at school and at home.

- Schools are encouraged to continue, as well as find new ways, to reduce consumer and food waste as well as support recycling options.
- Schools are encouraged to support energy-saving practices for food programs (e.g. energy saving equipment such as fridges and stoves that meet the *EnerGuide* standard).

vii. Students Who May Be Vulnerable

All students need nourishment during the school day. Some students may be challenged in meeting this need for a variety of reasons. In particular, 1 in 5 children in Nova Scotia live in poverty (Raven and Frank, 2004). Additionally, a significant number of children live with life-threatening food allergies or other medical conditions requiring special dietary considerations.

- Schools are encouraged to have healthy foods on hand for students who may require food, that meet the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1.
- Schools will ensure that students and families are aware of breakfast, lunch and snack programs that are offered at minimal or no cost and are open to all students.
- Schools must assure that food programs are made available to students in a non-stigmatizing manner (See Identifying and Addressing Hunger in Appendix X)
- Parents and schools need to work together to ensure staff/volunteers are aware of food allergies and guidelines for supporting children with food-related chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes, celiac). Some food-related medical therapies may preclude sections of this policy (e.g. autism)
- It is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver and the student, depending on their age and condition, to notify the school of allergies and medical conditions, and to make informed choices from the food available.
- Schools will serve and sell foods from the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** (Appendix 1) that are in alignment with Board Anaphylaxis and/or Peanut Aware policies and guidelines.

viii. Local Nutritious Produce and Products

Nova Scotia produces an abundance of produce and products. Buying locally grown food supports Nova Scotia agriculture and business and means that more money remains in the community. Locally grown, fresh food is often more nutritious if it is used shortly after harvest.

- Whenever possible, schools and food service providers should use local companies, produce and products first, that comply with the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1 (See Appendix X for a list of local producers and suppliers).

ix. Clean Drinking Water

Water is an essential nutrient. Even mild dehydration can reduce mental functioning, alertness, and energy levels.

- Schools will ensure students and staff have access to clean drinking water during the school day.
- Teachers and administrators will encourage students to drink water and can facilitate this by allowing water bottles into the classroom.
- Students should be encouraged to increase water consumption during hot weather and periods of increased activity.

B. Quality of Food Served and Sold by Schools

i. Criteria for Food and Beverages Served and Sold in School Canteens, Cafeterias, Lunch, Breakfast, Snack and After School Programs

- All food and beverages served or sold by the school during the school day will be consistent with the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1.

ii. Vending

When healthy vending options are available and promoted for sale in school, and when they are priced appropriately, students will purchase them (Fuel to Xcell Healthy Vending Program, Ottawa, 2004). Healthy vending options create an environment that reinforces the messages learned in the nutrition curriculum.

- Schools will offer healthy vending options in accordance with the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1
- Beverage vending machines will only offer milk (white, chocolate, flavoured and alternatives to milk, e.g. soy), 100% juice and plain water.

iii. Portion Sizes

It is important that the portion sizes offered to students and staff reflect and support healthy eating behaviours. Large portions not only provide more calories, but studies show that when people are served larger portions, they eat more food. (Young et al., 2002).

- Schools will provide appropriate portion sizes for food and beverages served or sold (See Background Rationale in Appendix 1 for reference sizes and suggestions.)

iv. Special Functions

Special school functions and celebrations provide an opportunity to share in school spirit and showcase healthy lifestyles in action.

- The foods and beverages served or sold at student and staff special events (e.g. parties, sports days, student council meetings, parent-teacher meetings, concerts) will comply with the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1.

v. Fundraising

Fundraising with healthy food and beverage choices or non-food items is supportive of the nutrition messages taught in the classroom, home and broader community.

- Fundraising efforts by schools or parent groups will centre around non-food products or foods that are suitable to serve or sell as part of the **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** in Appendix 1. (See Appendix X for fundraising ideas for schools.)

vi. Food Safety

Foods offered in schools need to be handled and prepared safely to prevent the spread of food borne illness and disease.

- Schools are required to prepare and serve foods in accordance with food safety standards as outlined by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. This may require the need for a Food Establishment License (See Appendix X for a List Contacts for the Department of Agriculture Food Safety Specialists).
- Any personnel responsible for preparing and serving food will have successfully completed a food handler's course within the past 5 years.
- Employees, staff or volunteers who work with food must have Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training.

- Schools will ensure that all food service preparation, storage, and delivery equipment are in working order and have working temperature controls.
- Schools will ensure that students have access to a sanitary/clean place to eat. To ensure cleanliness, placemats or disinfectant wipes are encouraged if students are to eat at their desks.
- Schools should encourage proper care and cleaning of food/beverage storage items brought from home, e.g. plastic containers, water bottles.
- Schools will promote and allow students time to wash their hands before consuming meals.

C. Nutrition Education

Nutrition education includes the formal, hidden, and parallel curriculum. The health education curriculum describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to adopt and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. The hidden curriculum provides opportunities to influence positive eating behaviours through creation of a school climate and learning environment supportive of healthy eating. The parallel curriculum builds external support systems and links between schools, families, and communities. Comprehensive approaches that include nutrition education, policy, and programs and that focus on the larger school community (e.g. students, teachers, volunteers and families) have the greatest impacts on nutritional health and learning (ADA, 2003; Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, 2004).

i. Curriculum

- The Department of Education will ensure continued development and currency of high quality, evidence-based health education curriculum that include food and nutrition outcomes.
- The Department of Education will ensure continued development and currency of high quality, evidence-based family studies curriculum that include foods and nutrition studies.
- When possible, schools should integrate nutrition education into other subject areas (e.g. reading nutrition labels in math) and activities beyond the classroom.
- The Department of Education will work with partners to enhance pre-service and in-service teacher education regarding nutrition education.
- The Department of Education will work with partners to ensure that opportunities for ongoing professional development are made available to teachers to support food and nutrition education.
- The Department of Education will work with partners to ensure that teachers and students have access to the resources they need to address food and nutrition curriculum outcomes.

ii. Role Models

School staff, volunteers, visitors, parents, and peers are all influential role models for students.

- School staff, administrators, volunteers, and students are encouraged to model healthy eating practises consistent with the curriculum, policy, and ***Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools.***

- School staff, administrators, volunteers, visitors, and students are encouraged to take the time to eat meals and snacks for their own health and well-being, as well as for role modeling purposes.

iii. School Activities, Resources, and Environment

Children need to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full if they are to develop a healthy relationship with their bodies as well as learn healthy eating behaviours (Satter, 2000). Using food as a reward teaches children to eat when they are not hungry. Finding alternatives to food rewards is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

- School staff and volunteers will not offer food as a performance incentive, or withhold food from students as punishment (See Appendix X for non-food reward alternatives).
- Schools will reinforce the policy and **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** within school athletic and physical activity programs.
- Schools are encouraged to establish a food and nutrition committee which includes administration, teachers, other staff, students, parents, food service staff, and community representatives, to be responsible for food and nutrition related issues.

Implementation Schedule

It is expected that components of the policy will be phased in over time. Schools will have the 2005-2006 school year to prepare to implement most of the provisions of the policy. It is expected that implementation of some of the provisions of the policy can begin in the 2005-2006 school year.

Any contracts for food and beverage services will remain intact until they expire. Upon expiration, it is expected that new contracts will comply with the policy and guidelines.

The Department will consult with stakeholders regarding the implementation process and ways in which the Department of Education, Nova Scotia Health Promotion, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Public Health, and other partners can best support implementation.

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Appendices

*Note: For information and guidelines pertaining to foods and beverages served in pre-primary programs, please consult: *Having Fun With Healthy Foods: A Day Care Menu Planning Manual*. See Appendix X for more information.

Appendix 1

Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools **Rationale and Guidelines for Foods Served and Sold by Schools**

The ***Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools*** are NOT meant to be a tool to evaluate student lunches and snacks sent from home. They are intended to provide criteria and suggestions for decisions about the food and beverages served and sold by schools during the school day. As changes are made, the guidelines offer a way to evaluate progress toward a healthy nutrition environment within the school.

BACKGROUND RATIONALE

Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools

The ***Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools*** helps ensure that students and staff have access to healthy food choices during the school day. In order to make it easier to know what to serve, the Guidelines provide detailed lists of healthy options that can be used in a variety of school situations from cafeteria and hot lunch menus, to canteens and vending machine snacks and more.

Use the Food and Beverage Guidelines for:

- ◆ Cafeterias, canteens, and vending services
- ◆ Breakfast, lunch and snack programs
- ◆ Fundraising
- ◆ Staff and school meetings
- ◆ Sports events and school celebrations
- ◆ Staffrooms and classrooms
- ◆ After school programs
- ◆ Parent and school community functions
- ◆ Catered functions

The Food and Beverage Guidelines are based on:

- **Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating**
- **Nutrient-rich food and beverage choices *Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily or Suitable to Serve/Sell Occasionally***
- **Nutrient-poor food and beverages *Not Suitable to Serve/Sell* in school**

Canada's Food Guide is based on Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating, which outlines key healthy eating messages for all Canadians over the age of 2 years. These are:

1. Enjoy a VARIETY of foods.
2. Emphasize cereals, breads, other grain products, vegetables and fruit.
3. Choose lower fat dairy products, leaner meats and food prepared with little or no fat.
4. Achieve and maintain a healthy body weight by enjoying regular physical activity and healthy eating.
5. Limit salt, alcohol and caffeine.

CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING

Together, the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide provide the necessary energy and nutrients for growth, development, health, learning and physical activity. For this reason it is important to include choices from each of the four food groups, as well as choices from within each food group every day.

NOTE: Refer to Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating in Appendix X or visit http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hpfb-dgpsa/onpp-bppn/food_guide_rainbow_e.html for an On-line Guide and Resources.

GRAIN PRODUCTS

Whole grains (e.g. whole wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice, etc) are an important source of fibre, which is necessary for a healthy digestive system. Whole grain and enriched products provide a source of energy, iron, magnesium, and B vitamins.

NOTE: Check out "How to Read Nutrition Labels" in Appendix X. Or visit: www.healthyeatinginstore.ca/

Tips for Including More Whole Grain Products!

- ◆ Serve bags of trail mix of ready-to-eat whole grain cereals (e.g. Cheerios, shredded wheat, oatmeal squares, etc) and dried fruit and nuts*.
- ◆ Use whole wheat pasta in macaroni and cheese and other pasta dishes. Start by using ½ whole wheat and ½ white noodles.
- ◆ Use whole wheat pizza crusts and tortilla wraps.
- ◆ Introduce whole grain breads by making sandwiches with ½ white and ½ whole grain.
- ◆ Serve muffins made with bran and fruit.
- ◆ Serve whole grain crackers with cheese and soups.

**Refer to allergy policies in your School Board*

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Vegetables and fruit contain a variety of important nutrients like vitamins A, C, and folate and the minerals iron and magnesium. A number of these nutrients are found in dark green, red and orange vegetables and in orange fruits. For this reason, Canada's Food Guide recommends they be chosen more often. This food group also contributes energy, fibre and plant compounds (phytochemicals), which are thought to contribute to health and reduce cancer risk.

Tips for Including More Vegetables and Fruit!

- ◆ Include a vegetable or fruit as part of daily meals or specials.
- ◆ Offer a fresh fruit or raw vegetable snack or canned fruit cup in the canteen. Try wedges of orange, melon, small bunches of grapes, ½ banana, carrot coins, turnip and celery sticks, broccoli floweret's, etc.
- ◆ Set up a salad bar or fruit parfait bar – start with once per month or once per week.
- ◆ Serve a hearty vegetable soup, stir fry or baked potato stuffed with healthy toppings such as salsa.
- ◆ Add vegetables like tomato, cucumber, peppers, mushrooms, and celery to sandwich fillings.
- ◆ Serve a hearty vegetarian pizza.

TIP: Hold student taste tests to increase exposure to and acceptability of new foods such as fruits and vegetables!

MILK PRODUCTS

Lower fat milk products such as white and flavoured milks (e.g. chocolate, banana, strawberry, etc), yogurts and cheeses provide high quality protein, vitamins such as B12, and the minerals calcium, zinc and magnesium. In addition, all fluid milks have vitamins A and D added which, in combination with the other nutrients, are essential for the growth and development of bones and teeth. Milk and yogurt with a fat content of 2% milk fat (M.F.) or less and cheese with 20% or less MF are considered lower fat choices.

Tips for Increasing Intake of Milk Products!

- ◆ Serve smoothies made with lower fat milk, yogurt and fruit.
- ◆ Serve milk-based soups and chowders.
- ◆ Include lower fat yogurt as a dip for fruit.
- ◆ Shred lower fat cheese such as mozzarella and include in sandwiches, salads, wraps and on baked potato.
- ◆ Try a yogurt parfait bar with healthy toppings such as fresh or dried fruit and granola-type cereal.

MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

Meat, poultry, and fish, in addition to alternatives such as dried peas, beans, lentils, eggs, and nuts, provide protein for the growth and maintenance of body tissues. This food group also provides a source of B vitamins such as B12 (in animal-based foods only) and folate, and the minerals iron, zinc and magnesium. The fat content of meats varies widely, with highly processed meats (e.g. salami, bologna, wieners, etc) and highly marbled cuts containing the most fat. Canada's Food Guide recommends choosing leaner meats, poultry and fish and more meat alternatives more often.

Tips for Including More Meat Alternatives!

- ◆ Serve Hummus and pita wedges as a snack.
- ◆ Offer hard boiled eggs or egg salad.
- ◆ Include tofu in stir fries.
- ◆ Serve lentil or split pea soups.
- ◆ Add dried beans and peas to soups and chili.
- ◆ Offer soy nut or almond butter as an alternative to peanut butter!

OTHER FOODS

"Other Foods" are those that do not fit into any of the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide. They can add taste and enjoyment to meals and snacks but tend to be high in fat, salt, sugar and/or sweeteners and have little or no nutritional value. Foods and beverages from the "Other Foods" category should be used in moderation because they provide fewer nutrients needed for growth and development. As well, they can fill up the stomachs of children and youth, as well as adults, leaving little room for nutritious foods and beverages.

Food and beverages from the "Other Foods" category should be used in small amounts less often. These include:

- Items higher in fat such as butter, margarine, salad dressing, sour cream, cream cheese, etc.
- Items higher in sugar such as candy, soft drinks, slushies, fruit drinks, jam, syrup, etc.
- Processed, snack foods high in salt and fat such as chips, cheesies, corn chips, etc.
- Items high in fat and sugar such as chocolate bars, packaged cookies and baked goods, pie, cake, etc.
- Beverages such as coffee and tea ; herbs and spices; artificial sweeteners, and condiments such as ketchup and mustard

A NOTE ABOUT ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Most children and adults experience a pleasurable sensation after consuming sweet foods or beverages. There is research to suggest that exposure to both nutritive (i.e. those containing calories like sugar) and non-nutritive (i.e. those containing little or no calories like Nutrasweet, Splenda or Acesulfame-Potassium) sweeteners increases the preference for “sweet” items (American Dietetic Association, 2004). Schools would not want to send the message that food or beverages had to be sweet in order to be delicious. Additionally, schools would not want to promote dieting behaviours by emphasizing choices of calorie-reduced products. Many artificially sweetened items can displace other nutrients students require for growth, learning and activity if they are not used to sweeten nutritious foods. For this reason, artificial sweeteners should be consumed in moderation as part of nutritious food and beverage items.

SERVING SIZES

Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating provides information on serving sizes that may or may not be the same as those listed on food packages. The portion, or amount of food, that should be eaten at meals depends on age, body size, activity level, and whether the person is male or female, among other factors. The portion sizes of food and beverages have increased over the years (e.g. super size). Research tells us that people tend to eat and drink more when food and beverages are served in bigger containers or portions. Canada’s Food Guide provides some examples of portion sizes for each food group. A serving of each different food within one food group is approximately equal (in the nutrients that are key to that food group) to every other food in that group. This does not mean that a school meal has to provide the ‘exact’ serving size, as described in Canada’s Food Guide for each food group, rather it serves as a guideline.

Serving Sizes From Canada’s Food Guide...

1 serving of GRAIN PRODUCTS = 1 slice of bread, ½ bagel, 125 mL (1/2 cup) pasta, 175 mL (3/4 cup) hot cereal, 30 g cold cereal

1 serving of VEGETABLES AND FRUIT = 125 mL (1/2 cup) fresh, frozen or canned, 1 medium fruit or vegetable, 250 mL (1 cup) salad, 125 mL juice

1 serving of MILK PRODUCTS = 250 mL (1 cup) milk, 50 g or 2 slices of cheese, 175 mL (3/4 cup) or 175 g yogurt

1 serving of MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES = 50-100 g meat, poultry, or fish, 1-2 eggs, 125 to 250 mL (1/2 to 1 cup) beans or lentils, 30 mL (2 Tbsp) nut butter, 100 g tofu

HANDY SERVING SIZER



A **thumb** equals 25 g of most cheeses. So 2 thumbs equal a serving.

A **thumb-tip** equals a teaspoon. Three thumb-tips equal a tablespoon, about the amount of milk you’d put in coffee.



A **palm** equals a serving of meat, fish or poultry. That’s without fingers and thumb!



A **fist** equals a cup. A fist would be 1 1/3 servings of yogurt. A fist size of raw leafy greens would be a serving of lettuce.

1 medium size
vegetable or fruit =
tennis ball



1 serving of meat,
poultry or fish =
deck of cards



1/2 cup of
vegetables, rice
or pasta =
lightbulb



(Dairy Bureau of Canada, 1998)

THREE CATEGORIES OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE GUIDELINES

The **Food and Beverage Guidelines for Nova Scotia Public Schools** groups food and beverages into three categories. Categorization of food is difficult because foods and beverages vary by brand, method of preparation (e.g. homemade versus commercial), and portion size. However, the categories will help make it easier to decide which items to serve or sell during the school day.

“Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily”

- Food and beverages that are part of the four food groups of Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating.
- High in essential nutrients for growth, learning and health (e.g. vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrate, essential fatty acids, fibre and water)
- Low in added salt, sugars, sweeteners and saturated and trans fats.
- Minimally processed.

“Suitable to Serve/Sell Occasionally (i.e. no more than 2 times per week or no more than 30% of choices at any one location ”)

- Food and beverages that are part of the four food groups of Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating.
- Contain essential nutrients for growth, learning and health (e.g. vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrate, essential fatty acids, fibre and water)
- May be lower in fibre and higher in fat, salt, sugar, sweeteners and/or processing.

“Not Suitable to Serve/Sell”

- Foods and beverages that offer minimal or no nutritional value
- Very high in sugar, fat, salt, caffeine, artificial sweeteners and/or processing
- Tend to replace nutritious foods when available as meals and snacks

RATIONALE FOR FOOD GROUPINGS

Grain Products

- Grain Products in the “**Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily**” list are whole grain, provide a source of fibre and are lower in fat (less than 3g/standard serving)
- Both ready-to-eat (RTE) and hot/cooked cereals in the “**Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily**” list should contain less than 6g of sugar per standard serving (e.g. 30 g serving for most cold cereals)
- Both ready-to-eat (RTE) and hot/cooked cereals in the “**Suitable to Serve/Sell Occasionally**” list should contain less than 6 g/standard serving of sugar, but may contain less fibre than choices in the “**Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily**” list.

Vegetables and Fruit

- Dried fruits (e.g. raisins, leathers) stick to the teeth and are best eaten as part of a meal, rather than as snacks.
- French fries and hash browns are very high in total fat and salt and are **“Not Suitable to Serve/Sell”** in school. This also includes items that come frozen, ready for oven heating, as these have previously been deep fried.
- “Fruit” drinks, aides, cocktails, punches, beverages, etc. contain added sugar, water, flavourings and sometimes colours and do not provide a serving of fruit. This also includes items labeled, “made with juice” or “contains juice”.
- 100% juice or “100% juice from concentrate”, etc. is part of the vegetables and fruit group.
- Servings of juice should be limited to 125 mL (1 serving) to 250 mL (2 servings) (i.e. 1/2 to 1 cup) to be sure it does not replace other nutritious foods and beverages.

Milk Products

- MF = Milk fat, BF = Butter Fat
- Cream cheese is not a source of calcium like other types of cheese and is mostly fat. For this reason, it appears in the **“Suitable to Serve in Small Amounts With Meals”** list.
- Cottage cheese does not provide the calcium other cheeses do, but it does provide other important nutrients found in milk. It is also higher in salt. It appears in **the “Suitable to Serve/Sell Occasionally”** list
- The usual serving size for milk and dairy-based beverages (e.g. smoothies) is 250 mL. (1 cup)

Meat and Alternatives

- Meat and alternatives in **the “Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily”** list are good sources of protein that are lower in fat.
- Nuts and seeds are higher in fat, but also provide nutrients. Serving sizes should be limited to ~ 50 mL (~3 Tbsp) or about 50 g

SYMBOLS



Sticky foods are denoted by the symbol of a toothbrush. These foods tend to stick to teeth, increasing the risk of tooth decay.

When these foods are eaten as part of meals, the risk of tooth decay is lower.



Salty foods are denoted by the symbol of a salt shaker. Aim for snacks that provide less than 500 mg of sodium per serving. The recommended **daily** upper limit for sodium intake in children age 4 to 8 years is 1900 mg/day and for children age 9 to 13 years is 2200 mg/day. For teens and adults the recommended daily upper limit is 2300 mg/day. (Dietary



Reference Intakes, 2004).

Suitable to Serve/Sell Daily





These foods and beverages are part of the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. They are high in essential nutrients for growth, learning and health (e.g. vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrate, essential fatty acids, fibre and water), and are low in salt, sugar, sweeteners, and saturated and trans fats. They contain little to no processing.



GRAIN PRODUCTS	VEGETABLES AND FRUIT	MILK PRODUCTS	MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whole grain or whole wheat</i> breads, buns, rolls, bagels, English muffins, pita bread, tortilla, pancakes, waffles, bannock, chapatti, roti, naan, pizza dough • <i>Whole grain</i>, unsweetened ready-to-eat cold cereals* and hot cereals e.g. shredded wheat squares, oat O's, cornflakes, crisped rice, oatmeal) • <i>Whole grain whole wheat</i>, lower fat** crackers and flatbreads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen or canned fruit and vegetables (no salt or sugar added; not in syrup; packed in water or juice; prepared with no added fat) • 100% fruit and vegetable juices or 100% juice blends • Applesauce applesauce-fruit blends (no sugar added) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower fat♦ milk including flavoured milks (e.g. chocolate, banana) • Fortified soy beverages original or flavoured – lower fat♦ • Yogurt, plain or fruit-based – lower fat♦ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken, turkey, cooked without added fat • Fish and † seafood, cooked without added fat • Lean meat--beef, pork, lamb

- *Whole wheat* pasta, noodles, macaroni, spaghetti
- Brown or wild rice
- Barley, bulgur or other whole grains
- *Lower fat*** muffins, quick with whole wheat flour, bran, and/or fruits and vegetables
- Trail mix (made from scratch)

- Vegetable soups (made from scratch) (e.g. squash, carrot)
- 100% frozen unsweetened juice bars
- Dried fruits (e.g. raisins, cranberries)

- 100% fruit or vegetable leathers (with no sugar added)

- Baked potato (preferably with lower fat toppings, e.g. salsa, low fat sour cream)
- Oven-baked potato wedges (made from scratch)

- Yogurt tubes (good frozen!)
- Cheese - lower fat[®] (e.g. part skim mozzarella, cheddar)
- Cheese strings - lower fat[®]
- Milk-based soups (made from scratch)
- Yogurt drinks - lower fat[†]
- Soy yogurts[†] and cheese products[®] - lower fat




- Lean deli meats (ham, roast beef, turkey, chicken) 
- Lean meatballs, preferably in tomato sauce base
- Canned fish packed in water 
- Eggs (e.g. hard cooked)
- Legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils) cooked or canned
- Split pea or lentil soups (made from scratch)
- Veggie or soy/tofu/lentil burgers - lower fat
-  Peanut butter or other nut butters
-  Dry-roasted nuts and seeds (unsalted)
- Soy nuts (dry roasted)

			and unsalted)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hummus • Bean-based dips
<p>* Cereals should contain 6 g or less sugar/standard serving</p> <p>**Lower fat = 3 g or less fat per standard serving</p> <p>NOTE: Ideally, these items should be made with unsaturated vegetable oils (e.g. corn, sunflower, safflower, canola, soybean, peanut, olive) versus hydrogenated fats or saturated oils such as palm and coconut oils.</p>	 <p>Denotes sticky foods</p>	<p>*Lower fat milk and dairy substitutes are those containing 2% or less fat</p> <p>~Lower fat cheeses are those containing 20% or less fat.</p>	<p>NOTE: Broiling, baking, roasting, grilling, poaching and stir frying are methods of preparation that use little or no added fat.</p> <p>☞ Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts and other foods. Schools should refer to Board policies that protect children with allergies.</p>  <p>Denotes salty foods</p>
WATER			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain, unsweetened, unflavoured water with no additives (e.g. caffeine, herbals) or artificial sweeteners 			
HERBS AND SPICES			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of herbs, spices and seasonings[℞] can be used to enhance the flavour and enjoyment of foods and beverages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ℞ Salt should be used sparingly 			
MIXED FOODS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole wheat pasta salad, preferably with vegetables • Whole wheat macaroni and cheese (made from scratch) • Whole wheat pasta dishes or casseroles made with tomato sauce and/or vegetables (e.g. spaghetti) • Pizza buns on whole wheat/grain English muffins, with lots of vegetables and part-skim mozzarella cheese (made from scratch) 			


- Cheese pizza made with whole wheat crust
- Vegetarian pizza or panzaroti (made from scratch) with vegetables and part-skim mozzarella cheese
- Vegetable sticks or fruit pieces served with lower fat dip (e.g. yogurt)
- Salad (e.g. any mix of greens and/or vegetables and fruit) (preferably served with lower fat dressing)
- Fruit smoothies (made with fruit, 100% juice, and or lower fat milk and yogurts)
- Frozen banana pops rolled in yogurt and granola
- Yogurt and fruit or yogurt parfaits with lower fat granola
- Vegetable pita or tortilla wrap (whole wheat)
- Vegetable stir fry's (with little added fat)
- Cabbage rolls (made from scratch)
- Vegetable-based chowders made with milk (e.g. corn) (made from scratch)
- Meat, poultry or fish stew, preferably with lots of vegetables
- Fish chowder (milk-based) served with a whole grain roll
- Chili with lean ground beef and lots of beans and vegetables
- Falafel (chickpea patties)
- Nut bars with dried fruit
- Souvlaki, tzatziki (yogurt, cucumber and herb dip) and whole wheat pita
- Shepherd's pie (made from scratch)
- Submarine/sandwiches with lean deli meats (turkey, ham, roast beef) and fillings (egg, tuna salad, vegetable) on whole wheat/grain buns or breads
- Stir fries with meat, poultry, seafood and vegetables
- Hamburgers made with lean beef (made from scratch)
- Baked burritos or soft tacos (bean or meat) made with whole wheat flour tortillas, served with vegetable sticks/salad
- Fajitas served on whole wheat flour tortillas
- Sweet and sour meatballs served on brown rice (made from scratch)

**Suitable to Serve/Sell Occasionally
(No more than 2 Times Per Week or No More than 30%
of Choices at One Location)**


These foods and beverages are part of the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. They contain essential nutrients for growth, learning and health (e.g. vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrate, essential fatty acids, fibre and water) but are somewhat lower in fibre and higher in fat, salt, sugar, sweeteners and/or processing.

GRAIN PRODUCTS	VEGETABLES and FRUIT	MILK PRODUCTS	MEAT and ALTERNATIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White, enriched bread, rolls, buns, bagels, bannock, chapatti, naan, English muffins, pancakes, waffles, pita bread, tortillas, pizza dough • White, enriched pasta • White rice • Sweetened, low sugar cereal[®] made with oats or whole grains (e.g. instant oatmeal, honey oat cereals, frosted mini wheat squares) • Granola-type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit in light syrup or with sugar added • Applesauce or fruit blends with sugar added • Vegetables with sauces • Vegetable soup (tinned or commercially prepared)  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole milk and flavoured milks containing more than 2% milk fat • Cottage cheese – preferably lower fat, i.e. 2% or less milk fat  • Higher fat cheese (i.e. more than 20% milk fat) • Yogurt and yogurt drinks containing more than 2% milk fat • Milk-based pudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meatloaf • Nuts and seeds (salted, seasoned and or roasted in oil) 




Cereals (less than 3 grams of fat per standard serving)

- Fruit or vegetable-based loaves or breads (e.g. banana, zucchini)
- Corn bread
- Bread stuffing
- Non-whole grain crackers (less than 3 grams of fat per standard serving)
- Melba toast or bread sticks
- Couscous
- Noodle or rice soups, preferably with vegetables 
- Biscuits or scones
- Cereal bars (less than 3 grams of fat per serving)
- Plain granola bars (not dipped, no added

(lower fat; less than 5 grams of fat per serving)

- Processed cheese products (e.g. slices, spread) 
- Hot chocolate made with milk
- Frozen yogurt (lower fat, 5% milk fat or less)
- Ice milk (i.e. single portion Dixie cups)
- Custard

chocolate chips,
marshmallows,
candy, etc.)

- Fig-filled cookies
- Graham crackers or digestive cookies
- Goldfish shaped crackers or animal-shaped crackers
- Cookies (made with oatmeal, dried fruit, and preferably whole wheat flour)
- Pretzels (soft or hard, preferably unsalted)
- Baked potato chips or tortilla chips 
- Bagel or pita chips (lower fat, plain or seasoned) 
- Crisp rice cereal squares (made from scratch)
- Plain/flavoured air popped or lowfat microwave popcorn 

- Plain/flavoured rice cakes, corn cakes or rice crackers



⊠ *Low sugar = 6 grams or less sugar per standard serving*

MIXED FOODS

- Enriched white macaroni and cheese
- Fruit crisps (made from scratch)
- Sloppy Joes, preferably on whole wheat buns
- Frozen pasta and sauces (tomato-based)
- Hard tacos – meat or poultry
- Pizza made with lean deli meats (e.g. ham, ground beef)
- Lasagna
- Bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, preferably on whole wheat bread
- Pasta in cream-based sauces
- “Salad-type” sandwiches made with mayonnaise or dressing (e.g. egg, chicken, tuna)
- Instant or canned soups
- Quiche – home made or commercial
- Grilled cheese sandwich
- Tuna/salmon and cracker snack packs
- Peanut butter[⊠] and cracker snack packs

Some of these items may be higher in salt.



Suitable to Serve in Small Amounts With Meals

- Salsa
- Hummus
- Bean dip
- Tzatziki (yogurt, cucumber and herb dip)
- Salad dressings and dips
- Yogurt-based fruit dip
- Caramel sauce
- Tomato sauces
- Jam, jelly
- Honey
- Butter
- Margarine (non-hydrogenated)
- Gravies
- Mayonnaise
- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Relish, pickles
- Sour cream
- Salt
- Cream cheese (light, flavoured, regular)
- Whipped cream, non-dairy whipped topping (e.g. cool whip)

➤ *To be used sparingly e.g. teaspoons or tablespoons amount*

Not Suitable to Serve/Sell

These foods and beverages offer minimal nutritional value, are very high in sugar, fat, salt, caffeine, sweeteners and/or processing and/or tend to replace nutritious foods when available as meals and snacks. These items are not suitable to serve or sell as part of cafeteria, canteen, vending, breakfast, lunch, or snack menus. As well, they are not suitable to be served or sold as part of school fundraising or special events.

MIXED FOODS

- Hot dogs Corndogs or Pogos
- Battered/breaded and fried items (commercially prepared) (e.g. French fries, fish, fish burgers or sticks, onion rings, clams, chicken nuggets or burgers, chicken, zucchini, mushrooms, cheese, etc)
- Processed, previously deep fried and oven-heated commercial products (e.g. chicken nuggets, chicken fingers, fries)
- Potted meats (e.g. chicken or beef pot pies)
- Pizza with processed high fat meat (e.g. pepperoni, salami, sausage and a mix of cheeses)
- Donairs
- Egg rolls
- Poutine
- Sausage rolls
- Chicken wings
- Dried instant noodles and single serve dried soup mixes
- Ready-to-eat cereals, high in sugar (greater than 6 grams per serving)

BAKED GOODS

- Donuts
- Pastries – turnovers, Danishes, Croissants
- Cake or cupcakes
- Tarts
- Pie
- Novelty cakes
- Cookies with sweet filling, icing and/or chocolate

PROCESSED OR SNACK FOODS

- Granola Bars dipped in chocolate or yogurt, or with chocolate chips, Marshmallows
- Candy – hard, soft, chewy, including those fortified with nutrients
- Chips – potato, corn, wheat or multigrain
- Chocolate bars
- Chocolate-coated candy
- Licorice
- Artificial fruit snacks and roll-ups
- Gum
- Cheesies and flavoured puffs
- Corn nuts
- Sesame snaps
- Banana chips

- Fruit gels or jellied desserts
- Popcorn popped in oil, sweetened or buttered
- Meal replacement bars, protein bars or energy bars

FROZEN NOVELTIES

- Popsicles and freezies
- Ice cream and frozen novelties (e.g. drumsticks, etc)
- Milkshakes
- Eggnogs
- Sherbet

BEVERAGES

- All pop – regular and diet
- Flavoured waters with artificial flavours or sweeteners
- Sports Drinks – all flavours
- Sweetened fruit beverages or drinks
- Slushes
- Hot chocolate made with water
- Meal replacement shakes or beverages
- Iced Tea (all flavours)
- Energy drinks or herbal drinks
- Lemonades
- Coffee
- Tea

Supports/Resources

Potential Appendices and Resources

Information on Health Promoting Schools

Information on Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries' School Milk Program

Breakfast Program Guidelines for Elementary Schools

Best Practices for Breakfast Programs

Ideas on how to integrate 'time to eat' with required instructional time ('time to learn') and bussing schedules ('time to travel')– sample day timetables.

Portion Size Chart/Guide

Emergency Food Cupboard – List of Ideas

How to Identify and Address Hunger in School – Food Security Sensitivity

Foods Safety Information (Fact Sheets) and Resources (e.g. tips on packing safe lunches from home)

Label Reading - Resources

Healthy Fundraising Ideas

Sample Vending Machine List
Sample Canteen List

List of School Food Suppliers/Companies

Healthy Ideas for Special Events Days

Contacts and Resources (Agriculture and Fisheries food safety specialists; local NS products, companies, etc.)

Best Practices for Improvement to School Food and Nutrition

School Food and Nutrition Success Stories

Supports for Schools and Boards (e.g. manuals, guides, videos, websites, communications from Dept. of Ed. Let's Talk About...)

Financial Resource for schools – physical structure needs

Human Resource Needs

How to Engage Students!

Having Fun With Healthy Foods – Where to Obtain Food/Nutrition Information and Guidelines for Pre-Primary Programs

Glossary of Terms