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## HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES IN SCHOOLS

APPROVED: 2006.06.27

REVISED: 2008.02.05

### ***POLICY***

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of proper nutrition in the physical and intellectual development of children. Children spend a significant part of their day in schools and are exposed to many influences with respect to food choices.

The Board, therefore, believes that schools must not only educate students to make wise choices in this area but must also provide an environment where healthy food choices are offered.

### ***DEFINITIONS:***

[“Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools”](#) is a document published jointly by the Ministries of Education and Health (Revised, September 2007). The guidelines divide food and beverages into four categories:

**Choose Most** – These items, including whole grain breads and fresh vegetables, tend to be the highest in nutrients, the lowest in unhealthy components, and the least processed.

**Choose Sometimes** – These items, including such things as fruit canned in light syrup, represent choices that are moderately salted, sweetened or processed.

**Choose Least** – These items, including such things as fries, tend to be low in key nutrients such as iron and calcium, and highly salted, sweetened or processed.

**Not Recommended** – These items, including candies and drinks where sugar is the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water, tend to be highly processed or have very high amounts of sweeteners, salt, fat, trans fat or calories relative to their nutritional value.

Along with general information and examples for each category, the guidelines offer detailed criteria to clarify which specific items fit where.

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**PREAMBLE**

This policy reflects the Board's belief in the role that schools have to play in ensuring that students are offered food choices that are healthy and nutritious. This belief has evolved in light of research concerning the long-term impact of diet on children's health and well-being.

Good nutrition can promote brain development, increase immune function, raise self-esteem, reduce anxiety, depression and hyperactivity, increase attendance, increase cognitive development and reduce the risk of health problems such as those associated with obesity.

The policy outlines steps that must be taken in order to provide such healthy choices.

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HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES IN SCHOOLS**REGULATIONS:**

1. This policy applies to all food and beverages sold to students in all school locations, including vending machines, concessions and cafeterias, and at fundraisers and other special events.
2. Additional guidelines apply to food supplied free of charge to students (see Administrative Procedure 2).
3. School staff should work together with students and parents to support and promote nutritious food choices by students.
4. Schools may wish to form teams and create action plans to promote healthy food choices in schools and to guide the process toward the goals outlined in this policy.
5. Schools should develop and implement marketing mechanisms to encourage healthy food choices. These mechanisms may include such things as making healthier choices more plentiful, more visible and less expensive than their less healthy counterparts.
6. Schools should use the document *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools* to guide their efforts in this area.

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HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES IN SCHOOLS**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:**

1. Food and Beverages Sold in Schools
  - 1.1 By September 2007, all food and beverages sold in schools should meet the following interim guidelines, as defined in *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*:
    - 1.1.1 At least 40 percent are in the “Choose Most” [ ✓ ✓ ] category.
    - 1.1.2 AT least 30 percent are in the “Choose Sometimes” [ ✓ ] category.
    - 1.1.3 No more than 20 percent are in the “Choose Least” category.
    - 1.1.4 No more than 10 percent are in the “Not Recommended” category.
  - 1.2 By January 2008 (elementary schools) or September 2008 (secondary schools), all food and beverages sold in schools should meet the guidelines outlined in *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools*. These guidelines specify that:
    - 1.2.1 At least 50 percent are in the “Choose Most” [ ✓✓ ] category.
    - 1.2.2 Up to 50 percent are in the “Choose Sometimes” [ ✓ ] category.
    - 1.2.3 Foods in the “Choose Least” category are to be eliminated.
    - 1.2.4 Foods in the “Not Recommended” category are to be eliminated.
  - 1.3 Food and beverages sold in vending machines should be represented in the proportions described above.
  - 1.4 Food and beverages sold in cafeterias and concessions and through other means, combined, will meet the above guidelines.
  - 1.5 Schools should use the following checkmark system to assist students in making informed choices about nutrition:
    - 1.5.1 [ ✓✓ ] = Choose Most
    - 1.5.2 [ ✓ ] = Choose Sometimes



HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES IN SCHOOLS

2. Food and Beverages Provided Free of Charge in Schools
  - 2.1 Although no specific regulations apply with respect to food and beverages provided free of charge to students, schools should use the above specifications as recommended guidelines for practice.
  - 2.2 This section includes food provided to students as rewards or incentives, as well as food offered in conjunction with celebrations or other class or school activities.

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