

## Nutrition and Healthy Living Policy

### **Policy Statement:**

Western School District promotes healthy food choices within the school environment, in accordance with the Provincial School Food Guidelines.

### **1.0 Rationale**

Good nutrition and active living are well recognized for their significant, positive impact on academic performance and students' growth and development. It is important to provide nutritious foods in schools where the meals and snacks consumed can make a major contribution to students' and staffs' total daily consumption of food and nutrients.

### **2.0 Application**

The Western School District Nutrition Policy encompasses all foods served or sold to students, 24 hours a day – every day, and at all school sponsored events, which include, but are not limited to:

- Cafeteria, canteen, vending machines
- Breakfast and snack programs
- School and classroom celebrations
- Meetings
- Student extra-curricular events
- Fundraising activities
- Hosting tournaments, festivals, fairs, and other co-curricular events.

### **3.0 Procedures**

Schools are encouraged to communicate to all stakeholders and have discussion on how they will implement the nutrition policy. Administrators are responsible to ensure that services and products provided by catering personnel and other food and beverage suppliers meet the provincial *School Food Guidelines*.

#### **3.1 Healthier Choices of Foods**

The nutrition policy is based on the provincial School Food Guidelines that emphasize healthier choices of foods and beverages. The guidelines categorize foods into “Serve Most”, “Serve Moderately”, and “Foods Not Included”.

(a) Foods Served and Sold in Schools

Foods and Beverages served and sold in schools will be selected from the “Serve Most” or “Serve Moderately” foods. (School Food Guidelines) These foods will emphasize:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Lower fat milk products
- Whole grain products
- Lean meat
- Foods prepared with little or no fat
- Foods low in salt, sugar and caffeine
- Foods high in vitamins and minerals

(b) Schools are encouraged to serve a variety of healthy meals, which include all of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide, and to ensure the additional daily lunch items are healthy foods.

(c) “Foods Not Included” are foods that are generally low in nutrients and may be high in fat, sugar, salt, caffeine, and/or calories. As these foods do not contribute to a healthy school nutrition environment, they shall not be served or sold in schools. (School Food Guidelines)

(d) Schools will not cook or supply deep fried foods.

(e) All food and beverages in vending machines will be selected from the “Quick Fixes for Healthy Vending Snacks” (School Food Guidelines). Vending machines will not be used to sell carbonated soft drinks, flavoured milks and water, sweetened juices, fruit drinks with less than 100% juice, sports drinks, or energy drinks.

(f) Schools should encourage water consumption by allowing water in classrooms.

(g) Energy drinks are high in caffeine, sugar, and additives. As schools are concerned about their affect on students’ behavior and health, these drinks are not permitted on school property.

(h) In instances where schools choose to offer a reward to students or classes for good behavior, achievement, or participation in

fundraising activities, the Western School District encourages schools to offer nonfood items or physical activities. If any food is used, it should meet the School Food Guidelines.

- (i) At the discretion of the school principal, some flexibility is permitted during special occasions to allow food to be served from outside the Provincial School Food Guidelines. Special occasion foods can be served up to a maximum of three times per school year and must be offered along with foods that do fit within the Food Guidelines so students can have a healthier option. If schools choose to exercise this flexibility option, school principals are responsible for choosing the three special occasions per school year, e.g. Christmas, Valentine's Day, Graduation. (Note: This flexibility option does not allow for parents to bring in birthday cakes for each and every birthday throughout the year.)
- (j) Schools should create a pleasant environment for students to eat. Eating areas (cafeterias, multi-purpose rooms, and classrooms) should be properly cleaned after lunch.
- (k) To ensure compliance with the District Nutrition and Active Living Policy, schools shall identify an individual or a committee to promote healthy eating and monitor foods and beverages sold and served to students. (The committee could be the Living Healthy School Committee or the Safe and Caring Schools Committee.) This individual or committee shall carry out a regular review of the canteen, cafeteria, vending machines, and breakfast programs to ensure compliance with the District Nutrition Policy.

### 3.2 Student Access to Food

The Western School District encourages schools to reduce hunger among children living with food insecurity and to enhance access to healthy foods in a non-stigmatizing manner.

- (a) Schools are encouraged to have school breakfast, snack, and milk programs to meet student needs.
- (b) If a child does not have a lunch for whatever reason, schools are encouraged to provide the child with healthy foods from an emergency food cupboard or the canteen.
- (c) Schools should offer foods at reasonable prices.

- (d) No vendor or outside group can sell food on school grounds without the approval of the school principal. If permission is given by the principal, foods provided to students must meet the School Food Guidelines.

### 3.3 Food Safety

- (a) Schools should create a strategy to ensure students wash their hands properly prior to eating.
- (b) Administrators will ensure that caterers, school staff and parent volunteers are familiar with safe food handling practices (School Food Guidelines). This may require the need for partnership with outside agencies to ensure food safety standards are met.
- (c) When schools provide appropriate equipment (microwaves or warming ovens) to reheat meals that students bring to school from home, care should be taken to ensure this equipment is cleaned and maintained frequently.
- (d) Food allergies should be considered for foods served and brought in to schools, as per the Western School District Anaphylaxis Policy.

### 3.4 Environment

- (a) Schools should create a pleasant environment for students to eat. Eating areas (cafeterias, multi-purpose rooms, and classrooms) should be properly cleaned after lunch.
- (b) Schools are encouraged to schedule a recess period at an appropriate interval between start of school day and lunch break.
- (c) Schools should allow a minimum of 20 minutes for students to eat lunch. The lunch break should allow sufficient time to enable students to take part in physical activity before or after eating their meal.
- (d) To ensure compliance with the District Nutrition Policy, schools are expected to identify an individual or a committee to promote healthy eating and monitor foods and beverages sold and served to students. (The committee could be the Living Healthy School Committee or the Safe and Caring Schools Committee.) This individual or committee will carry out a regular review of the

canteen, cafeteria, vending machines, and breakfast programs to ensure compliance with the District Nutrition Policy.

### 3.5 Nutrition Education

- (a) The Western School District will work with other partners to develop and enhance health and nutrition curriculum and resources.
- (b) Schools will support opportunities for staff development and training for effective delivery of nutrition curriculum.
- (c) When possible, schools should incorporate nutrition education into other subject areas and outside classroom activities.
- (d) Schools should promote activities to positively influence nutrition knowledge, attitudes, skills and eating habits within the whole school community.
- (e) Schools will encourage parents and/or guardians to send nutritious meals and snacks to schools.
- (f) Teachers, administrators, and other school staff should act as positive role models to promote healthy eating within the school environment, in accordance with the Provincial School Food Guidelines.
- (g) The Western School District, schools, and school community will support and reinforce messages about healthier eating in schools.

### 3.6 Marketing and Promotion

Schools should establish a process to promote and develop a healthy eating environment. Representatives of all school community stakeholders, especially students, should be involved in the process.

- (a) Consider developing site-specific guidelines using the Western School District Policy as a framework.
- (b) Promote the school food guidelines, make decisions on foods served, and review foods offered.
- (c) Create a marketing and promotional plan for nutrition foods. Schools should aim for the theme “The Healthy Choice is the Easy Choice”.

- (d) Schools are encouraged to price items of less nutritious value to ensure these items cost at least as much as or more than nutritious foods.
- (e) Display attractive, current promotional materials related to healthy eating throughout the school.
- (f) Ensure advertising, signage and other equipment reflects healthy food choices.
- (g) Participate in activities that promote healthy eating and active living.
- (h) Acquire current Canadian nutrition material for the school resource center.
- (i) Schools should incorporate nutrition information in their home and school communication (e.g. memos, newsletters, websites, etc.).

### 3.7 Community Partnerships

- (a) Schools are encouraged to partner with local organizations to support their school projects.
- (b) Possible contacts to assist schools:
  - Businesses
  - Service Organizations
  - School Council, Home & School Association, Parent and Teacher Association
  - Community Recreation Groups
  - Public Health Nurse, Dietitian
  - School Health Promotion Consultant
  - Others, as applicable to school communities
- (c) Schools should avail of the Kids Eat Smart Foundation, the School Milk Foundation, and other national or provincial food and nutrition programs.

### 3.8 Fundraising

Fundraising activities by schools shall emphasize non-food products or healthy food choices from the “Serve Most” or “Serve Moderately” foods within the Provincial School Food Guidelines. Alternative fundraising activities are suggested in the Healthy Eating School Resource Manual.

## APPENDIX

### Guidelines for Increasing Physical Activity of Students

The Western School District acknowledges the responsibility schools play in providing an environment that promotes school health for all students. Participation in a variety of physical activities at an early age helps to promote a life-long commitment to an active and healthy lifestyle.

1. Schools shall adhere to the recommended instructional time guidelines for the Physical Education curriculum and the Health curriculum as outlined by the Department of Education Program of Studies. Where schools are challenged to strictly adhere to the guidelines for Physical Education due to capacity or other issues, the school shall forward its plan for Physical Education to the Assistant Director of Education (Programs) or designate to review.
2. Teachers shall deliver the Physical Education curriculum and Health curriculum as outlined in the Physical Education and Health Curriculum Guides.
3. Each K – 6 school shall establish guidelines that support and provide sufficient time for outside unstructured playtime at recess and lunch (subject to weather conditions and student safety as determined by school administration).
4. Daily physical activity can be achieved through a regular physical education class. It can also be achieved through structured activity (intramurals, clubs, dance) or unstructured activity (outside play) that can be offered before and after school. These activities, however should complement and not substitute for the physical education program.
5. Schools shall promote active transportation to and from school. This can be done in a variety of ways such as: providing bicycle racks for students to secure their bikes and hosting special days such as the Kids Eat Smart Walk to Breakfast Day.
6. Teachers in K – 6 schools, with the support of District Office personnel, shall use physical activity to help diversify instruction in academic subject areas.
7. Schools shall actively participate in the Living Healthy Commotions each school year.
8. Schools are encouraged to establish a Living Healthy School team to help implement good nutrition, physical activity, and other health-related

initiatives. This team could be part of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative.

9. School staffs are encouraged to act as positive role models to promote healthy lifestyles within the school environment.
10. Schools are encouraged to partner with local organizations to support their school health projects. Possible contacts to assist schools might include: local businesses, service organizations, School Council, Home & School Association, community recreation groups, Community Health Nurse, School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant, and Regional Wellness Coalition.