



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

This document is intended to supplement the standards and requirements established in Policy 711. The policy should be referred to first when a question arises regarding its contents. This document does not replace or supersede the information contained in Policy 711, its appendices or its handbook. School district policy is allowed to be stricter than Policy 711, in those cases, please refer to your district's policy for guidance.

IMPLEMENTATION

How is the policy implemented in multi-level schools (K-8, K-12) or schools located in community centres (example: École Sainte-Anne)?

The policy does not make any specific references to multi-level schools or schools located in community centres. For ease of implementation, some districts have decided to apply the elementary school standard (section 6.3.5) in these situations. Some schools located in community centres have locked vending machines during schools hours and worked with the community centre to ensure healthier foods are available in canteens run by the centre.

How often can schools serve foods in the moderate category?

Foods with moderate nutritional value may each be served a maximum of twice a week. The emphasis is on the individual food, rather than the overall food category. For example, a school can serve low fat banana bread, homemade pizza and frozen yoghurt each twice a week. If there is a school dance in the evening, food served at the dance can be from the moderate category without impacting the selection from this category during lunch hour or snack times. The overall intent of the policy is to promote and provide the healthiest foods most often while encouraging the provision of foods from the moderate category on a less frequent basis.

How do the food categories apply to vending machines?

It is hard to ensure the serving frequency of items sold in vending machines. The list on page 3 of Appendix A serves as a guideline for healthier foods to be sold in vending machines; however schools have some degree of choice when they are stocking vending machines. Schools should make every effort to include foods with maximum nutritional value whenever possible. It is also important to include students in the decision-making since they are the primary users of the vending machines.

Food brought to school by students

The provincial policy does not apply to food that students bring to school. The provincial policy does not authorize teachers to scrutinize foods sent to school from home. The policy does encourage teachers and school staff to discuss healthy food options in the context of a lesson or class room discussion. It is very important to enforce positive messages around healthy eating and avoid creating negative associations with certain foods. If a student is bringing unhealthy foods on a regular basis then perhaps a teacher could organize a lesson on healthy foods to bring to school rather than singling out the student in a negative way.



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

FUNDRAISING

If a teacher is a parent at a school, how is their participation in a fundraiser effected?

If a parent is acting in their capacity as a teacher, then they would follow the standards expected of all teachers. Section 6.2.1 indicates that students and staff should not use foods with minimum nutritional value in their fundraising efforts during school hours but parent and community groups can organize fundraisers outside of school hours using foods with minimum nutritional value. As employees, teachers have to observe the policy while involved with fundraising at the school level. Parent and community groups (including parents who are also teachers) fundraising on the weekend, outside of school hours, can use foods in the minimum nutritional value category. However, all groups should be encouraged to use non-food items or healthier food items.

Can schools sell peeler cards which may feature coupons for fast food restaurants, for example?

The policy does not prohibit the sale of peeler cards or coupons for products that are not consistent with the policy. Typically, the usage of these discounts would be the decision of the parents, and would usually be used after school hours or on weekends. Districts and schools can continue to use these peelers and coupons but, as with all other areas where health and nutrition are a factor, groups should be encouraged to use products that are consistent with the policy.

Can schools sell hot chocolate as a fundraiser?

The powdered form of hot chocolate is high in sugar and hydrogenated fat and relatively low in nutrients so it would be considered to be a food with minimum nutritional value. Schools and students would not be able to use this product in a fundraiser but parent or community groups would be able to fundraise with powdered hot chocolate.

Do elementary schools have to stop fundraising with foods with minimal nutritional value for fundraising immediately or do they have until Sept. 2007?

Section 6.2.1 applies to elementary and secondary schools, therefore, all schools have until Sept. 2007 to phase out the use of foods with minimal nutritional value for fundraising.

FOOD CATEGORIES

Flavoured milk (chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, etc)

Flavoured milks (2% Milk Fat or less) are in the maximum nutritional value category. It is very important to note that there is significantly more sugar in the flavoured milk (such as chocolate milk), and therefore, more calories. Flavoured milks include the *Milk 2 Go*¹ brand: *Vanilla Vibe, Chillin' Chocolate, Strawberry Splash, Banana Blast* and other similar products. *Extreme Shakes* are not included; these are in the minimum nutritional value category due to the higher sugar and fat content.

¹ The use of product brand names, logos, etc. is not intended to be an endorsement or a denouncement of those products. It is intended to be used as a guide to facilitate the implementation of the provincial and district nutrition policies.



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

Dehydrated potato flakes

When the nutrient analysis of actual potatoes is compared with prepared mashed potatoes from dehydrated flakes, the products are very similar in protein, fat, carbohydrate, sodium and vitamin C. The difference is probably in taste and amount of prep time. Schools can consider dehydrated flakes as a maximum nutritional value food.

Cheese Whiz/spread

Appendix A indicates that sauces or spreads, such as *Cheese Whiz*, can be used to complement foods but should be low in fat and used in moderation. Sauces and spreads can increase the consumption of foods with maximum nutritional value; however, they can be high in fat, sodium and/or sugar and therefore, should be used in moderation.

Baked taco (tortilla) chips

Baked taco (tortilla) chips are of moderate nutritional value and can be served up to twice a week in cafeterias. At the present time, baked tortilla chips may be sold in vending machines as an alternative to regular chips (even with their limited nutritional value).

Soft Tortilla bread

Soft tortillas are of maximum nutritional value. The whole wheat variety should be encouraged, where possible.

French fries

Currently, oven-baked French fries are in the moderate nutritional value category while deep-fried French fries are in the minimum food category. It has recently been determined that oven-baked French fries (and other potato products) are previously deep-fried before packaging even though this process is not advertised on the product package. The following factors can influence the final fat content of a potato product.

- oil type
- period of time in the fryer
- consistency of the potato itself
- cut (surface area) of the potato

Portion control is very important. French fries should never be served as a complete meal but rather as a side-dish of approximately 85 grams (e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of potato wedges or 19 French fries, maximum of 4 grams of fat). Schools are not permitted to deep fry any food product and should not add additional fats to these products (consistent with Policy 711, Appendix A). As such, schools may consider oven-baked French fries as a moderate nutritional value choice (i.e. they can be served a maximum of twice per week).

Some school districts have chosen not to serve French fries at all. This is an option and is consistent with the policy-making authority District Education Councils maintain. If a district chooses to develop their own nutrition policy, it must meet the minimum requirements of Policy 711 and may be more comprehensive than the provincial policy. In addition, schools that previously did not offer French fries are encouraged to continue this practice. Alternative potato products do exist that are healthier than the oven baked fries, such as diced potatoes, potato wedges, etc.



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

Potato Chips

Potato chips are of the minimum nutritional value and should be served rarely. If they are baked, these products can be served as they are lower in fat as compared to a regular chip. It should be noted that although baked chips are lower in fat, they are not a nutrient dense food therefore should be consumed only in moderation. However, they are appropriate for vending machines. *Sun Chips* are placed in the minimal nutritional value category because they are very similar in fat content to regular chips.

Baked cookies from grocery store bakeries

The bakeries at local grocery stores sell “homemade” cookies such as oatmeal raisin. These cookies may be high in sugar and fat. Look for cookies (whether “homemade” or packaged) that meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- Contain at least 2 grams of fibre
- Have 5 grams of fat or less
- Do not list sugar as one of the top 2 ingredients

Popcorn

Air popped or light microwave popcorn is a popular snack and provides a source of fibre. Movie theatre popcorn is very high in fat and salt and not consistent with the Policy 711. If a class is on a field trip to the movie theatre, ask if you can bring your own healthier popcorn or other snacks. If not, make sure to incorporate healthier foods at the theatre. Pay attention to the portion sizes; some theatres offer “kid sizes” that are also more affordable than combos. Even if it is a “special occasion”, efforts should be made to encourage the inclusion of healthier snacks (section 7.4). Not all popcorn is created equal. Look at the Nutrition Facts table on the food label to find popcorn that is lower in fat and sodium and provides less than 30% of total calories from fat (grams of fat X 9 = calories from fat, / total calories = % calories from fat). For example, *Downeast Kettle Korn* has 50% of the calories from the fat. This is much too high to be considered for sale in schools.

Flavoured water

Flavoured water does not contain many calories but it also does not contain many nutrients. Most flavoured waters are sweetened with artificial sweeteners and therefore are considered sweetened beverages and fall in the minimum nutritional value category. It is important not to give students the idea that food/beverages need to be sweetened to be tasty nor do we want to be promoting “diet” products.

Caesar Salad

Schools may sell Caesar salad daily (maximum nutritional value) as long as : 1) bacon bits are not used, 2) the dressing is low fat, 3) portion size of the dressing is considered, and 4) low fat croutons are used.

Whole grain, Whole wheat, White flour

The provincial policy places whole grain, whole wheat and white products in the maximum nutritional value category. When it is not possible to offer whole grain options, schools are allowed to opt for white flour based food products that are consistent with the maximum food category. Recently, producers have begun to market “white” whole wheat breads. The fibre content is higher



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

than white flour based breads and is a good option in schools for students who won't eat whole wheat bread.

Veggie Dogs (soy)

Soy products fit under the maximum nutritional value food category but attention should be paid to the sodium content. Some schools have limited veggie dogs to the moderate food category because of the high sodium content.

Turkey & Chicken Dogs

These products are generally high in fat, sodium and nitrates. They should be considered a food with minimum nutritional value, similar to regular or beef hot dogs.

Packaged Puddings

Prepared, packaged puddings are in the minimum nutritional value category. They generally contain numerous additives, hydrogenated fat, and only 4% of daily value of calcium. They do not contain enough calcium to be ½ milk serving as per Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. Homemade puddings (either from scratch or from a mix) that are made with low fat milk are in the moderate nutritional value category.

Granola Bars

Check the Nutrition Facts table and ingredient list on granola bars. Look for ones that meet at least 2 of the following criteria:

- Contain at least 2 grams of fibre
- Have 5 grams of fat or less
- Do not list sugar as one of the top 2 ingredients.

Real Fruit Chews

"*Real Fruit*" is a registered trade mark for Dare candy company. These chews do not contain a significant amount of fruit juice and are a candy. Check the ingredient list on the product to see if sugar is listed. If sugar is listed as an ingredient, it should be avoided. Fruit snacks that can be offered are ones that are 100% fruit leathers (i.e. Sunrype, Fruit to go, Fruit and Veggie bars).

Hot Chocolate

Powdered hot chocolate is very high in sugar and hydrogenated fat and relatively low in nutrients. It would fit into the minimum food category. Schools can make hot chocolate out of chocolate flavoured milk, if they wish. This type of hot chocolate would fit into the maximum category and could be served daily (flavoured milk).

Garlic fingers – Only garlic fingers that contain less than 30% of total calories as calories from fat may be served.

Fruit Slushies

Chartwells is putting fruit slushie machines in many of their cafeterias. Based on information provided by Chartwells dietitians, these are acceptable to be sold in our school cafeterias. They are made from 100% pure apple juice concentrate, are pasteurized, have no preservatives, contain



Policy 711 Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools

only natural flavours and are fortified with vitamin C. It is recommended that the 7 oz portion size be followed. Most other slushies are made from sugar and water so those types would not be allowed in policy 711 as they would be considered a sweetened beverage (minimum nutritional value).

FOOD AS REWARD

The type of food offered as a reward is not the issue. It is the act of offering food of any kind as a reward that establishes a negative relationship with food for many people. In addition, many of these “rewards” are offered in between meal times and add additional calories. A good job should be rewarded with praise and other non-food related incentives that do not create a negative association with food (section 6.1.5).