



ELK ISLAND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Seeing Christ in Everyone

EICS Nutrition Policy

Questions and Answers

1. Why do we have a nutrition policy?

- Our Board recognized that we are already promoting healthy eating in our schools.
- Schools have been described as an ideal setting to establish and promote healthy eating practices in children and adolescents. Healthy eating at school may positively influence eating practices at home and in the community.
- Studies show that well-nourished students do better at school!
- A policy that supports healthy food and beverage choices can help ensure that the healthy choice is the easy choice in schools.

2. What does this policy mean for our schools?

- All foods regularly served or sold within the Division should include choices from the ***Choose Most Often*** and ***Choose Sometimes*** categories as per the ***Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY)***.
- This includes foods served or sold in vending machines, cafeterias, concessions, school sponsored events/activities, classroom parties, celebrations, staff events and meetings, hot lunches and snacks and fundraising and rewards.

3. What food categories are recommended to promote healthy eating at school?

Choose Most Often

These are foods that are healthy choices with good nutrient value that should be **eaten daily** in appropriate serving sizes. This category promotes a balanced diet consisting of a variety of foods from the 4 food groups as identified in Canada's Food Guide.

Choose Sometimes

These are foods that may contain some added sugar, salt, or unhealthy fat, but still provide some nutrient value. **No more than 3 servings** from this category is recommended per week.

Choose Least Often

These are foods that have no nutritional value, or are high in sugar, sodium, or unhealthy fat. They should be eaten **once a week** preferably in the home and in small portion sizes.

4. What about food from home?

- This policy is to promote healthy food choices that are sold or offered at school.
- It does not apply to foods brought from home for individual lunches or snacks. It is not intended as a tool to judge or “police” foods from home.
- Parents and families can use the Nutrition Policy and supporting documents (i.e. ANGCY) to help guide food and beverage choices in the home and community.

5. What can schools do to support this policy?

There are many ways in which a school can support the Nutrition Policy. Forming a Health Team in the school is a great way to determine ways in which your school can incorporate this policy.

- Healthy Fundraising (More Non-Food Items).
- Define Frequency of Special Food Days and/or provide healthier options on Special Food Days.
- Schedule lunch breaks that provide time for eating and activity (i.e. Reverse Recess).
- Vending Machines/Concessions offer Choose Most or Choose Sometimes options.
- Healthier Staff Meetings/Events – role modeling what we preach!
- Working with Hot Lunch Committees to offer healthier Hot Lunch Options.

6. What can be done in the classroom to support the policy?

- Healthy Rewards –offering food-alternative rewards that are age appropriate.
- Healthy Classroom Parties – encouraging **Choose Most Often** or **Choose Sometimes** food and beverage items. **Choose Least Often** items are permitted provided there are healthy food options offered, as well. Monitoring the frequency of classroom parties is also recommended.
- Providing positive messages and role modeling healthy eating behaviors.
- Incorporating reliable nutrition information into educational material and health curriculum.

7. What are some rules of thumb to help guide food choices?

- The closer the food is to it’s natural state, the more likely it will fall into the **Choose Most Often (CMO)** Category (i.e. fresh apples vs. apple pie).
- Select 100% whole grains including breads, pastas and rice.
- Watch for portion sizes as well as sugar, sodium and unhealthy fat content (no more than 5g and 15% daily value).
- Check ingredients for red flags. Artificial sweeteners (i.e. aspartame) are not recommended for children and will put a food in the CLO category. The long-term effects of artificial sweeteners on children’s health have not been well studied or documented.
- Cooking method has an impact on nutrition – encourage foods that are baked, steamed or broiled. Avoid foods that are deep fried or parboiled in oil.

“It’s not a ban on junk food; we’re just getting out of the business of promoting it”

Jaqueline Domac: A health teacher at Venice High School in Los Angeles, 2000

Resources Available to Promote the Nutrition Policy

1. Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth 2011

http://www.healthyalberta.com/Documents/FINAL_Nutrition-Guidelines-AB-2011.pdf

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/Documents/Healthy-Eating-Schools-2011.pdf>

2. Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

3. Steps to a Healthy School Environment: School Nutrition Handbook

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-school-nutrition-handbook.pdf>

4. Single Serving Packaged Food List – Supporting Nutrition Initiatives in Schools

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-single-serving-pkg-food.pdf>

5. School Lunch Restaurant List

<http://www.stmonica.ecsd.net/pdf/School%20Lunch%20Restaurant%20List%20-%20FINAL%20Aug%2031%202011.pdf>

6. School Nutrition Education Resources – Alberta Health Services

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2914.asp>

7. Healthy Fundraising

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-healthy-fundraising.pdf>

8. Healthy Rewards

http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf

9. Healthy Concessions/Snack Shack

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-snack-shack-manual.pdf>

10. Special Lunch Days

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/SchoolsTeachers/if-sch-nfs-special-lunch-days.p>