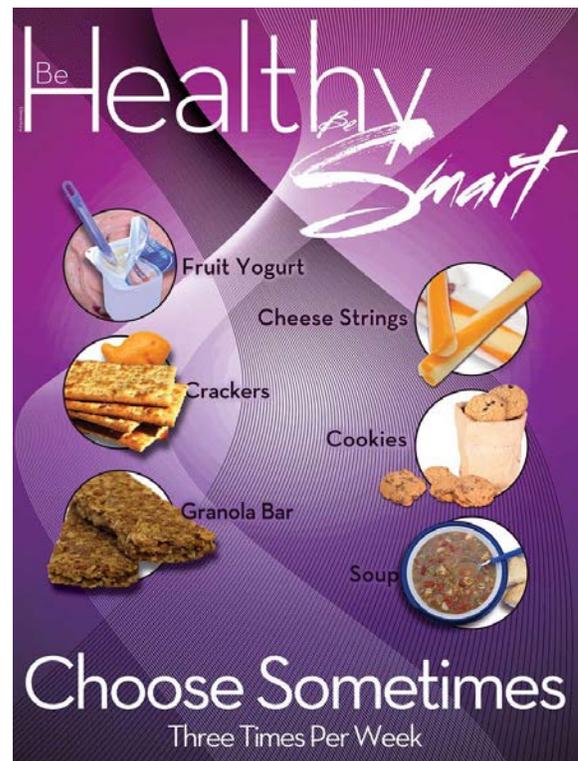
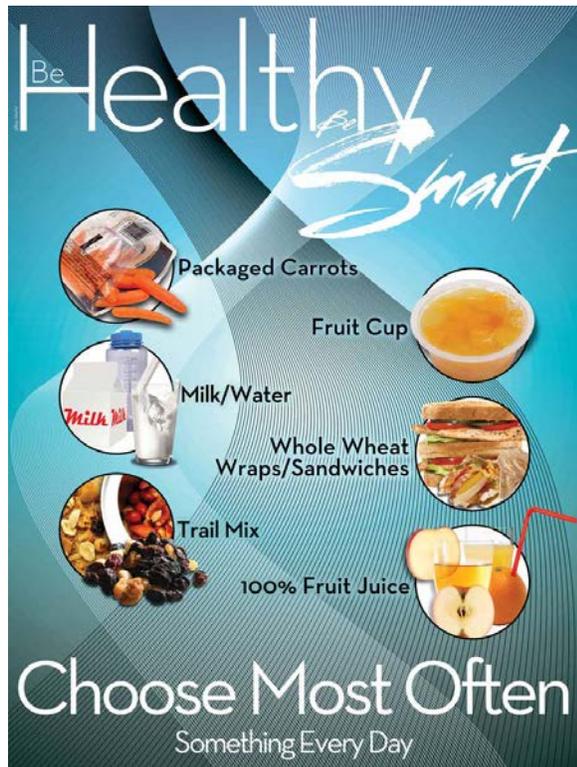


# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools



2014 - 2015

Parents Handbook

This handbook provides information on the Edmonton Catholic School District Nutrition Policy, what you can do as a parent to help support it and useful tips that can be used at home.



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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Nutrition Policy

### Why a Policy?

- Healthy eating is related to better performance in schools
- To support classroom instruction about healthy food choices
- To ensure healthy food options are offered in schools
- ECSD has a Nutrition policy to support all the above

### The Policy

The Edmonton Catholic School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health, well-being, and the ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Specifically, the district is committed to the following statements:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in dialoguing and collaboratively making decisions and engaging in practices which promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- All students from K – 12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to eat healthy foods.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will support healthy eating choices. Foods will be from the “Choose Most Often” or “Choose Sometimes” categories as outlined in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for children and Youth (2012).
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education, and foods available at the school and for school sponsored activities.

**While the overarching philosophy of this policy and regulation establishes specific guidelines at the board level, there is recognition that each school has its own uniqueness and is encouraged to meet these guidelines within its own environment.**

**See Appendix A for Board Policy and Regulations**

### **What foods are included in the Policy?**

- Food served and sold in all Edmonton Catholic Schools will be from the Choose Most Often and Choose Sometimes categories of the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth. (<http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Nutrition-Healthy-Eating-AB-Schools.pdf> ) This includes foods found in vending machines, school stores and cafeterias. Schools are encouraged to choose healthy foods for special event and school sponsored activities.

### **What the policy means for your child**

- The policy supports classroom instruction about healthy eating and overall wellness. Children are taught about making good choices for their bodies and providing healthy foods in the schools further reinforce these messages.

### **What can parents do to support healthy eating in schools?**

- It doesn't take endless hours to help support healthy eating in schools, some actions take no time at all. The next section will show you the different ways you can help make a difference in your school!

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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Vending Machines and School Stores

Vending machines and school stores have traditionally been filled with unhealthy foods such as chocolate bars, chips and pop. Having treat foods available all the time has made it normal for children to have these foods on a daily basis. Unhealthy foods offer little nutrition and often replace healthier foods. Good nutrition is essential for proper growth and development of children and youth. Therefore, it is important that children and youth have access to healthy foods while at school.

Edmonton Catholic School District has worked closely with vendors to ensure that food and beverages offered in vending machines and school stores meet the criteria for “Choose Most Often” or “Choose Sometimes”. This aligns with the nutrition policy and ensures that foods high in fat, sugar or salt are not available. This change has been in effect since 2009 and our vendors continue to search for new, healthy products.

### What can parents do?

You may think there is nothing you can do if the foods in vending machines and stores are already healthy options. However, there are still issues that come up, and the best thing you can do is to be aware of these concerns. Below is a list of common misconceptions and the truth behind them. Knowing the facts and sharing them with other parents or community members is a great way to support the implementation of the Nutrition Policy.

### Common Misconceptions

#### ***Pop and candy makes more money!***

- Most school purchases are made because of convenience and price. Traditional vending machines with pop and candy DID make money, but not just because of the items offered. Experience has shown that vending machines that offer healthy options that are priced either comparable or slightly less, sell just as many or more items than the traditional unhealthy foods. The key is to **ONLY** offer healthy foods in vending machines. Students and teachers will purchase for convenience and price.

***Kids should have a right to choose!***

- Students are faced with choices every day and food choices are no different. Throughout their education they are taught about healthy eating and healthy food choices in the classroom, whether it's in Health class, Physical Education or Science Class. It is vital that a school environment supports the education that is taught in the classroom. Teaching healthy eating in class and then offering unhealthy food options in the vending machines or school store is like teaching students that smoking is bad for you and providing a smoking area for them. Consistent messaging in all areas of teaching will help students to make informed choices in the real world.

***Kids will just go down to the local store!***

- Some schools have a closed campus policy where children are not allowed to leave the school grounds during lunch. For schools that do not have this policy, parents can help to support the policy by teaching their children about healthy choices, discourage them from leaving the school or encourage them to do other activities with their time. Parents can also work together with local convenient stores to limit student access during these hours. This can be beneficial for store owners because it can reduce the incidence of store crowding and the possibility of minor thefts.

***There aren't any tasty choices!***

- There are many healthy food items on the market that are not only tasty, but popular choices among students. Edmonton Catholic Schools has compiled many resources to support schools in making healthy choices. These resources are available to all schools and can be shared with parents. If you aren't aware of these documents ask your child's teacher or principal. The resources include a Costco Food List, M & M Meat List and the Alberta Health Services: Single Serving Packaged Food List. All of these resources provide food options that support the Edmonton Catholic Policy.

# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## School Sponsored Events/Activities

School events are a time when the school community comes together. Food is often a central part of these events. It is an excellent opportunity to role model healthy eating.

### What can parents do?

A great way to support healthy foods choices in schools is to get involved with the parent council or volunteer on planning committees for events and school-wide activities. Parents can also help find community supports, such as local grocery stores or restaurants that can provide healthy food options.

### Need some suggestions?

See below for some healthy meal and snack ideas that you could suggest for the next school event.

Meal Ideas	Snack Ideas
<b>Sandwiches Wraps or Flatbread:</b> use whole grains with egg, tuna, or chicken, topped with sliced veggies.	Sliced vegetables with hummus
<b>Hamburgers:</b> whole grain buns with lean beef, chicken or vegetarian patties.	Fruit tray
<b>Tacos:</b> whole grain tortillas with lean beef or chicken, lettuce, tomatoes and low salt (sodium) salsa.	Yogurt cups
<b>Chili:</b> use lean beef, chicken, turkey or vegetarian, with lots of vegetables and beans. Serve with a whole grain bun.	Whole grain crackers with low fat cheese
<b>Spaghetti:</b> use lean beef or chicken and lots of vegetables for the sauce. Serve over whole wheat noodles.	Low salt (sodium) pretzels
<b>Healthier Pizza:</b> use whole grain crust with vegetables and lower fat meat and cheese for toppings.	Whole grain cookies or muffins

# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Classroom Parties and Celebrations

Cupcakes, chips, candy and pop are not the only foods that will make a party festive for kids. Instead of overloading the classroom with fatty and sugary treats, take this opportunity to model healthier options that are tasty and fun.

It is valuable to teach children that healthy foods are the normal way to eat at all occasions. When unhealthy foods are offered as rewards or served at parties and celebrations, it teaches them that treat foods are more valuable or better than healthy foods. This can be confusing to children when they learn that foods high in fat, sugar or salt are not good for their bodies.

### What can parents do?

Provide your child with healthy food options for classroom celebrations. Healthy party foods do not need to be expensive or involve a lot of preparation time. See below for some fun party foods.

- **Fruit kabobs:** using bamboo skewers or Popsicle sticks, thread a variety of fruits that are cut into large cubes. Examples: grapes, apple, pear, strawberry, pineapple, melon or kiwi.
- **Ants on a Log:** Spread peanut butter on celery sticks and place raisins on top. Other nut butters can be used. (Inquire about allergies).
- **Mini Muffins.** See websites below for recipe ideas.
- **Frozen fruit and Yogurt Pops:** Add 2 small bananas, 1 cup frozen berries and 2 cups low fat vanilla yogurt into a blender. Blend until smooth and fill Popsicle molds. Freeze for at least 3 hours. Makes 6 popsicles.
- **Veggie sticks and hummus:** try vegetables such as: carrots, celery, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, broccoli or mushrooms. Try making or purchasing different flavours of hummus.
- **Party Snack Mix:** 3 cups Cheerios, ¼ cup raisins, ¼ cup pumpkin seeds and 2 Tbsp. semi-sweet chocolate chips. Makes six ½ cup servings.
- **Healthy Cookies or Squares:** see websites below for recipe ideas.
- **Pinwheel Wraps:** Spread mustard and low fat mayo on a whole grain wrap. Top with sliced chicken or turkey, lettuce, sliced tomato and grated carrots. Roll tightly and cut into 2 inch sections. Place sideways on a plate.

## More Recipe Ideas for Classroom Parties

Looking for healthy baking recipes? See the websites below for some free, fun ideas.

- **AHS Inspiring Healthy Eating Recipe Collection**  
<http://www.healthyalberta.com/recipes.htm>  
Fun, kid friendly recipes that are labeled as either “Choose Most Often” or “Choose Sometimes”.
- **Bake Better Bites**  
<http://www.bchealthyiving.ca/sites/all/files/BakeBetterBites.pdf>  
This booklet includes a variety of healthy baking ideas that kids will love.
- **Bake It Up**  
[http://www.eatrightontario.ca/EatRightOntario/media/ERO\\_PDF/en/School/Bake\\_It\\_Up\\_final.pdf](http://www.eatrightontario.ca/EatRightOntario/media/ERO_PDF/en/School/Bake_It_Up_final.pdf)  
Healthy, creative baking ideas that are great for classroom parties.

## No time, no worries

If you only have time to pick up something at the grocery store, try these ideas:

- Fruit or veggie tray
- Healthy trail mix
- Yogurt tubes: put in the freezer overnight
- Oatmeal or whole grain cookies
- Sandwich or wrap platter made with whole grains
- Baked pita chips
- Baked fruit chips
- Low salt pretzels
- Chocolate milk
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice

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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Cafeteria

Many high schools have cafeterias and traditionally sell foods that are considered less healthy, for example deep fried French fries, greasy hamburgers or poutine. Pop or slushie drinks are also commonly found in cafeterias. Edmonton Catholic has worked with cafeteria providers to develop healthier food options including more fresh fruit and vegetables, salads, healthier hot meals and snacks. Change takes time, but it has been observed in many of the schools that have improved their menus, the sales have increased and students and staff have reacted positively towards these changes.

### What can parents do?

If you have concerns about foods that are served in your child's school, it is important to voice these issues. Talking to the school principal or business manager is a good place to start. Your school cafeteria operator may not be aware of healthier options and their support available to help make changes.

Ask your child what he or she would like to see served at their school. Many students would prefer healthier options and many leave the campus to find these choices. Encouraging change at the school level, benefits both the students and the school. Profits from the sale of food at schools, helps to support many activities within the school.

## Fundraising

Traditional fundraising has included chocolate covered almonds, bake sales, hot lunches, and school-wide events such as fall fairs, barbeques or event dinners. All have been great ways to raise money, and with ever tightening budgets schools can afford to lose opportunities to raise money. The following section shows some traditional fundraising events, healthy changes and what parents can do to support the changes

## What can parents do?

Many parent groups organize fundraising for their schools, it's important for these groups to choose fundraising options that don't rely on too many volunteers, are safe for children and are good money makers. See below for healthier alternatives to traditional fundraising products or events:

## Healthy Ideas for Fundraising

Event or Fundraising Product	Healthy Option
<b>Chocolate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frozen muffin/cookie dough (make sure to read the labels!)</li> </ul>
<b>Bake Sales:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cakes, cookies, high fat sugar options, processed or purchased baked goods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for less processed foods if purchasing items FOR the bake sale (the fewer the ingredients the better!)</li> <li>If you (and your child) are making items for your school's bake sale – try some great healthy recipes from recipe books such as (Yes they are free!)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bake It Up <a href="http://www.eatrightontario.ca/EatRightOntario/media/ERO_PDF/en/School/Bake_It_Up_final.pdf">http://www.eatrightontario.ca/EatRightOntario/media/ERO_PDF/en/School/Bake_It_Up_final.pdf</a></li> <li>Bake Better Bites <a href="http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/sites/all/files/BakeBetterBites.pdf">http://www.bchealthyliving.ca/sites/all/files/BakeBetterBites.pdf</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>If you find (or create) a healthy recipe, SHARE IT! Many school newsletters have room to add something from parents. Talk to your school secretary about how you can submit things to your school newsletter.</li> </ul>
<b>Hot Lunches:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot Dogs/Hamburgers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower sodium/fat hot dogs</li> <li>Whole Wheat Buns</li> <li>Keep your eyes open when you are shopping for your family. If you find healthy hot dogs/hamburgers be sure to let your school lunch coordinator know.</li> </ul>
<b>School – Wide Events:</b> School dinners or events often include items that are convenient but may not be healthy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although a lot of effort and time goes into the planning of these events, it doesn't take much more to make it healthy.</li> <li>Partner with local grocery stores for discounts on healthy foods. Many retail stores will offer discounts or gift cards for school events (especially if they have an advertising opportunity!)</li> </ul>
<b>General Information: Healthy Fundraising for Schools: a practical guide for parents and educators:</b> <a href="http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/451/healthy-fundraising-for-schools-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-educators">http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/program/451/healthy-fundraising-for-schools-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-educators</a>	

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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Parent Wellness Committee

Many schools have an active Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) or a School Council. These committees meet regularly to discuss and plan important events and programs for their schools. Fundraising, sporting events and extracurricular activities often take center stage at these meetings and healthy food options play an important role. A supportive Parent Committee can help to ensure that the entire school environment provides healthy food options. If your school has a small Parent Committee or doesn't have one at all, it really doesn't take much effort to get one started or to make healthy changes. There are several steps that have been shown to create successful Committees that can help schools create the healthiest environment possible.

### **Steps to Start a Parent Wellness Committee:**

1. Find a healthy eating champion – Ask around, are there any parents at your school who have a passion for healthy eating? Often there are parents that have many hidden skills but don't know how to use them or how they can help. A simple request in a monthly newsletter could identify that champion.
2. Assess your school environment – Look around your school, what kind of food options is offered? Do the staff and students like the options? Is there room for improvement or expansion? Did you know that students (and staff) WILL buy healthy options if they are available? And schools can make money from healthy foods!
3. Identify your goals – Don't try to change everything overnight. As a Parent Committee, choose 1 or 2 goals that are easy to attain, this will ensure success. Even small changes can make a big difference!
4. Implement Changes – If you have parents that can't spend a lot of time helping during the day with your Committees goals, there are still many things they can do. Advocate. Role Model.
5. Celebrate Success

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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Healthy Lunch and Snack Ideas

Although the Edmonton Catholic Policy does not include foods brought from home, parents have a great opportunity to help support the school and re-enforce the healthy food environment.

If you are looking for new ideas, there are many free online recipes that can be used for healthy lunches and snacks. The Alberta Health Services website has lots of recipes that are Choose Most Often and Choose Sometimes. Visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page10996.aspx>. Involving your children in the choices and preparation of their lunch will increase the likelihood that they will consume it (and not trade it!).

### Healthy lunch tips:

A healthy lunch includes foods from all four food groups found on Canada's Food Guide (Vegetables & Fruit, Grain Products, Milk & Alternatives and Meat & Alternatives) For more information on Canada's Food guide refer to <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>. The following ideas will help save time and ensure your children will like what you send.

- Make a list of your children's favourite foods according to each of the four food groups (include both hot and cold foods). If you notice that some food groups have very few choices, encourage your child to pick foods he or she might like to try. Visit Canada's Food Guide "Choosing Foods" for ideas from each food group.
- Try to make lunches right after supper so there is less rushing in the morning.
- Plan to make more food at supper so there are leftovers for lunch. If your child's school has a microwave he or she can reheat their food, otherwise use a thermos or insulated container to keep foods hot.

### Healthy snack tips:

A healthy snack includes foods from at least 2 of the 4 food groups found on Canada's Food Guide. Snacks are a great opportunity to increase your child's intake of vegetables and fruit. See healthy ideas below:

- Try to include at least one vegetable or fruit with each snack.
- Watch how much you give your child and make sure it is easy to eat often there isn't much time at recess.
- Use the list you made for lunch ideas to help you pick snack items

# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Summary

The Edmonton Catholic School Board Nutrition Policy is in place to support schools in creating a healthy eating environment including, classroom education, foods served or sold, special events, classroom rewards or celebrations and fundraising. It takes the whole school community to be successful in making healthy changes in schools. Parents play an important role in supporting healthy initiatives in your child's school.

# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

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# Healthy Eating in Edmonton Catholic Schools

## Appendix A – Policy and Regulations

[https://www.ecsd.net/AboutUs/annual\\_reports/Policies-and-Regulations/Pages/General-School-Administration-Index.aspx](https://www.ecsd.net/AboutUs/annual_reports/Policies-and-Regulations/Pages/General-School-Administration-Index.aspx)

**Background:**

Given that:

- the Board of Trustees has created the following Ends Statement:  
*That the Board of Trustees will, within the limits of approved resources, support the creation of school environments that promote wellness and facilitate healthy lifestyle choices for staff and students;*
- the Catholic belief is that the human body is good and to be treated with dignity, and that as part of creation, the body is to be properly cared for. Scripture says that the human body is a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1Cor.6:19). Properly understood, health is one of the most important goods for which we all have a precise responsibility (John Paul II, February 2, 2005 – message to congress on “Quality of Life and Ethics of Health”).
- children need access to healthy food and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive;
- good health fosters student attendance and academic achievement.
- in the last two decades, Alberta rates of overweight children aged 7 to 13 years old have more than doubled, and the national rates for obesity in adolescents have tripled. Physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;
- obesity is a societal problem (rather than an individual problem) because individual choices are influenced by family, friends, and culture. Individuals need the opportunity to be active and choose healthy foods where they work, play, and learn.
- habits often established in childhood, such as unhealthy eating and physical inactivity, are major risk factors for heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes;
- home and community participation are essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

The Edmonton Catholic School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health, well-being, and the ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Specifically, the district is committed to the following statements:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in dialoguing and collaboratively making decisions and engaging in practices which promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- All students in grades K – 12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to eat healthy foods.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will support healthy eating choices. Foods will be from the “Choose Most Often” or “Choose Sometimes” categories as outlined in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for children and Youth (2008).
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education, and foods available at the school and for school sponsored activities.

**While the overarching philosophy of this policy and regulation establishes specific guidelines at the board level, there is recognition that each school has its own uniqueness and is encouraged to meet these guidelines within its own environment.**

Reference:	Approved:	
	Date Approved:	June 26, 2006
Cross-reference:	Date(s) Revised:	September 30, 2009



**While the overarching philosophy of this policy and regulation establishes specific guidelines at the board level, there is recognition that each school has its own uniqueness and is encouraged to meet these guidelines within its own environment.**

- 1) As well as addressing the learning outcomes for nutrition as contained within the Alberta Education Health and Life Skills/CALM Programs of Studies, schools should set nutrition education guidelines to establish and maintain a healthy food and nutrition environment.**
  - Nutrition concepts should be reinforced by all school personnel, and integrated within subjects when appropriate.
  - An environment that provides and promotes healthy food choices and healthy attitudes about food will be encouraged, as per the Canada Food Guide and the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.
  - Nutrition education should include the importance of physical activity and health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle.
  - Information on nutrition should be offered in cafeterias and displayed in the proximity of vending machines (i.e. posters).
  - Students should receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom, cafeteria, and home via the information and resources the schools send to families.
  - Schools are encouraged to conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community.
  - Schools should encourage involvement of parents and students in selection of food choices (surveys and feedback).
  - School staffs and other adults shall be encouraged to provide positive role modeling.
  - Schools should try to engage family members as a critical part of the team responsible for teaching children about nutrition.
  - Schools will provide support to parents, students, and staff in making healthier nutritional choices.
  
- 2) Schools will develop practices to establish nutrition guidelines for all food made available by the staff on school campuses during the school day. This will be done in collaboration with the School Council. These practices will be reviewed at least every third year by the School Administration and the School Council. These practices will address which foods will be available:**
  - In vending machines
  - In the cafeteria (e.g. provision of a salad bar, fruit bars, a variety of healthy and appealing choices in appropriate portions)
  - During school sponsored events/activities
  - During classroom parties, celebrations, and meetings
  - For fund-raising activities, as well as providing options for non-food related fundraising items.



**In developing nutrition policies described above, the district provides the following guidelines:**

- For food safety, allergy awareness and general nutrition information, an ingredient list and where possible, a nutrition facts table, should be readily available. This information should be on display for foods offered in snack bars, a la carte, vending and school stores.
- All foods made available will fall within the categories of “Choose Most Often” and “Choose Sometimes” in accordance with the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth.
- Elementary, Junior and Senior High schools will not provide soft drinks, rather an array of milk, juices and water should be made available.
- Schools may also want to include guidance regarding appropriate serving sizes and catering options.

Reference:	Approved:	
	Date Approved:	June 26, 2006
Cross-reference:	Date(s) Revised:	September 30, 2009