

POLICY

SCHOOL NUTRITION AND HEALTHY EATING

Responsibility of: Student Wellbeing and Inclusion
Effective Date: October 2017
Next Review Date: October 2021
Target Audience: Staff/Parents/Community/ Canteen Managers/ External Service providers

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This document should be read in conjunction with [School Nutrition and Healthy Eating Guidelines](#).

1. INTRODUCTION

The Northern Territory Department of Education (the department) is committed to ensuring that students in school settings have access to healthy food and drinks and nutrition education to help inform their decision making in the future. Improving access to healthy food and drinks and physical activities is linked to healthier students who can achieve better learning outcomes¹. Staff are encouraged to play an active role in supporting healthy eating and nutrition in schools by:

- ensuring all foods and drinks provided at school are consistent with this policy and its associated guidelines
- actively role modelling healthy eating behaviours
- promoting healthy eating and good nutrition in the classroom and with families.

When food or drink is provided to students in a school (by the canteen or during any other activity or program), schools must meet the requirements of this policy and guidelines which are based on nutrient criteria from the [National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines 2014](#), the [Federation of Canteens in Schools](#), as well as the [Australian Guide to Healthy Eating](#).

The department acknowledges the complexities behind providing nutritious food and drinks to students; however, in the interest of the current and future health of our students, all efforts must be made to ensure compliance with this policy.

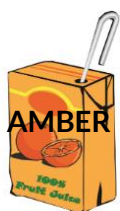
FOOD AND DRINK CATEGORIES



ALWAYS ON THE MENU

These foods and drinks are the best choices for a healthy school canteen and during school activities. A large variety of these foods and drinks must be available every day and represent the main choices on the canteen menu or when provided at school. They have a wide range of nutrients and are generally low in saturated fat and/or sugar and/or sodium (salt).

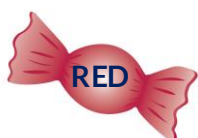
¹ National Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention – Division of Population Health. *Health and Academic Achievement*. May 2014. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf



**SELECT
AREFULLY**

These foods and drinks contain some valuable nutrients, moderate amounts of saturated fat and/or sugar and/or sodium (salt) and if eaten regularly or in large amounts, may contribute to excess energy (kilojoules) being consumed. These foods and drinks **must be** assessed carefully against the nutrient criteria tables in the [National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines 2014](#) to ensure that:

- the healthiest choices from this category are selected
- these foods and drinks **must not** dominate the menu
- the serving size is small.



**NOT ON THE
MENU**

These foods and drinks **must not** be sold or provided in schools, unless part of a whole school event. These foods and drinks may contain excess energy (kilojoules) and/or saturated fat and/or sodium (salt) and/or sugar and are low in nutritional value.

Information to assist schools to use the food and drink categories, including the classification of specific items, is contained in the [School Nutrition and Healthy Eating Guidelines](#).

2. BUSINESS NEED

Schools have an opportunity to foster healthy eating habits by aligning the curriculum, nutritional recommendations and food provision². This policy has been developed to ensure all students have access to healthy foods and drinks and a consistent approach to the availability and sale of food and drinks in NT Government schools.

Data published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare indicates that in 2014-15 the percentage of overweight or obese children in Australia was 1 in 4 (25%)³. Factors which may contribute to childhood obesity and weight issues can include poor food choices, lack of physical activity, limited access to, and knowledge about, healthy food and drink options. Poor food and drink choices affect a number of other childhood health issues including oral health and dental care. In 2010, 55% of 6-year-olds had experienced decay in their baby (deciduous) teeth and 48% of 12-year-olds had experienced decay in their permanent teeth⁴.

The early years are also an important time for establishing lifelong healthy eating habits. Under the [Education and Care Services \(National Uniform Legislation\) Act 2011 \(NT\)](#) (the Act) and [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012 \(NSW\)](#) (the Regulations) preschools and school based outside of school hours care services must ensure:

- children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are regularly offered nutritious food and beverages throughout the day
- the service implements healthy, hygienic and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, including food and beverages provided by the family
- the food or beverages provided are nutritious, adequate in quantity and caters for each individual child's dietary requirements.

² Lawlis, T, Knox, M and Jamieson, M. Dietitians Association of Australia. 2016. *School Canteens: A systematic review of the policy, perceptions and use from an Australian Perspective*.73:389-398 10.1111/1747-0080.12279.

³ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Overview. 2015. Available at <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-statistics/behaviours-risk-factors/overweight-obesity/overview>

⁴ University of Adelaide. 2015 *Oral health and dental care in Australia: facts and figures 2015*. DEN 229. Accessed on 28 October 2016 at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554609>

3. SCOPE

This policy and associated guidelines apply to all NT Government schools including preschools and early childhood services and programs, including [Families as First Teachers programs](#), where food is provided by the Department of Education.

School canteens, vending machines, nutrition education, fundraising, excursions, school sport events, school nutrition programs, classrooms (including classroom rewards), preschools, early childhood services, breakfast programs, afterschool programs coordinated by a school, and outside of school hours care services coordinated by a school involving food and drinks must comply with the food and drink categories. However, some exemptions apply as detailed below:

SCHOOL NUTRITION AND HEALTHY EATING - POLICY EXEMPTIONS

Exemption	Details
Food and drinks supplied from home	This can include birthday cakes. Schools can actively encourage the provision of healthy food/drink by parents, such as whole grain muffins.
Whole school events	This can include a school fete, carnival or disco; however, does not include fundraising activities. Schools should ensure that students are provided with a range of GREEN foods, in addition to any RED food choices.
Preschool and early childhood settings	Full fat dairy products are recommended for children aged birth to two years, so these products are classified as GREEN for this age group. Reduced fat dairy products are suitable for children aged over two years so full fat dairy products are classified as AMBER for children over two years.
Middle Schools	Food Technologies classes*
Senior School	Food and Hospitality classes* Senior School only campuses (years 10-12), in consultation with their School Councils or Independent School Representative Board, students, canteens and staff determine whether to comply with the policy in their respective school setting.*
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Hospitality courses*
Staff vending machines / fridges	School staff are encouraged to support the policy by not consuming RED foods and drinks in front of students.

*Although these activities are exempt, schools are encouraged to provide and use **GREEN** foods and drinks wherever possible.

*

An outside of school hours care service or afterschool program run by an external provider (which includes school councils registered as providers,) is required to have policies/guidelines in place regarding nutrition for students in their care in accordance with the [Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012 \(NSW\)](#).

4. DEFINITIONS

Afterschool programs are programs such as homework centres and sporting programs which are coordinated by a school or an external service provider such as a school council on school grounds.

Classroom rewards are incentives provided to whole classes or individual students as a form of positive reinforcement.

Dietary requirements refers to a child's allergy, cultural, religious or medical condition that requires special consideration in planning and providing food and beverages.

Excursion means an educational, sporting or cultural trip by students within or outside the Northern Territory, under the direction of teachers and activity leaders authorised by the department.

Fundraising is an activity that staff, students or the school community co-ordinate inside or outside school hours to raise funds for the school.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.⁵

Outside of School Hours Care services (OSHC) are provided for pre and school-age children outside of school hours which are coordinated by the school, school council or operated by an external service provider on school grounds.

School canteen is the facility that provides food and drinks to students and staff. This includes traditional school canteens in urban settings, rural and remote provision of breakfast, snacks, lunches, and private providers supplying food and drink to school students.

School sport event is any sporting event that staff, School Sport Coordinators, School Sport NT or the school community co-ordinate inside or outside school hours.

School nutrition and breakfast programs are breakfast and/or lunch services for students which support improved attendance and contribute to learning and engagement in education.

Whole school events include those instances where a suspension of normal school activities / classes occurs for celebration or commemorative purposes and involve all students and the broader school community. Examples include a school fete or disco.

⁵ Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Refer to the [School Nutrition and Healthy Eating Guidelines](#).

6. ATTACHMENTS

- A. [Creating a healthier menu guide](#)
- B. [Frequently asked questions](#)
- C. [How to decide if a food or drink is suitable for a school](#)
- D. [Health alternative to sausage sizzles guide](#)
- E. [Ideas for fundraising fact sheet](#)
- F. [Health food based fundraising ideas](#)
- G. [Newsletter inserts](#)
- H. [Recipe checklist](#)
- I. [Sporting events, fundraising ideas and non-food rewards guide](#)
- J. [School camp idea and barbecue catering guide](#)
- K. [Tips for parents fact sheet](#)

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Department of Education acknowledges the cooperation and contributions of the Northern Territory Department of Health, particularly in regard to expert nutrition information and resources.