



School Nutrition Standards

Coast Mountains School District

November 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are committed to nourishing our relationships and to continue learning from Indigenous communities that we walk alongside. We acknowledge the unceded lands of the Ts'msyen, Gitx̱san, Haisla, and Nisga'a peoples and the unique cultures from many diverse nations who live in relation to these Lands, Places and Peoples.

This resource would not be possible without the support and collaboration from

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This resource supports schools and school food providers in the Coast Mountains School District with creating a healthy food environment. It is intended for school staff making decisions on foods offered in the school setting. It does not apply to foods brought from home as a part of a student's lunch, food and beverages prepared by students as a part of a class project or culturally important foods.

On average, students consume about 1/3 of their daily intake of food at school. Schools are uniquely positioned to support students by exposing them to food they may not experience elsewhere. Research shows us that school food programs can:

- *Provide students with nutrients for growth and development*
- *Improve school performance, learning ability, attention span and behaviors*
- *Provide energy for daily activity and learning*
- *Support better physical and mental health outcomes*
- *Set the foundation for life-long healthy eating habits and attitudes*
- *Increases acceptance and enjoyment of nutritious foods*
- *Provide students with sense of connection, belonging and care*

Division of Responsibility

A healthy school food environment includes not only the foods that are offered, but also the physical environment and overall approach to feeding. Schools and school staff are encouraged to apply the Division of Responsibility of Feeding, which outlines the different roles of adults and kids at mealtime:

Caregiver decides	
• What foods are offered from home	
School decides	Student decides
• What food is offered in school food programs, school events and school spaces • When food is offered (e.g. recess, lunchtime) • Where food is offered	• How much and whether to eat from food that are offered • In what order they will eat their food

In the school context, the school's role is to:

- Provide consistent mealtime and access to nourishing food options.
- Ensure students have enough time to eat. Aim for at least 20 minutes of seated time, so that all types of eaters have time to enjoy their meal.
- Ensure students have a pleasant and safe eating space.
- Avoid pressuring students to eat certain food or amounts of foods. e.g. avoid comments such as "clean your plate" or "take one bite"
- Respect food choices parents or caregiver pack from home.

For more info:

- [Nurturing healthy eaters in the classroom](#) (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- [Coaching Kids to Become Good Eaters](#) (Northern Health Authority)

Rewards, Fundraisers & Celebrations

“Using food as a reward can have some effect on the eating habits of young people. Often it is unhealthy foods such as candy, cookies or chips that are used as rewards. Help young people to build healthy eating habits by using non-food rewards” ~ Healthier Rewards (Vancouver Coastal Health)

Celebration/Special Event	Category
Open House	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions
Orange Shirt Day	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions. Please consider Traditional Foods regardless of the category they fall under.
Thanksgiving	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions
Halloween	70% Offer Frequently, 20% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions, 10% Avoid
Christmas	70% Offer Frequently, 20% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions, 10% Avoid
Valentines Day	70% Offer Frequently, 20% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions, 10% Avoid
Pink Shirt Day	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions
Easter	70% Offer Frequently, 20% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions, 10% Avoid
National Indigenous Day	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions. Please consider Traditional Foods regardless of the category they fall under.
End of Year	70% Offer Frequently, 20% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions, 10% Avoid
Birthdays/Class Parties	70% Offer Frequently, 30% If offering serve infrequently and in smaller portions

Food Fundraisers, including items from the “Avoid” list, can take place during school hours on any of the Celebration/Special Events days listed above.

Examples of food fundraisers: Bake Sale, Popcorn Sale, Candy Grams, Freezie Sale

Fruit and Vegetables	
<i>Offer Frequently</i>	<i>If Offering, serve infrequently and in smaller portions</i>
• Fresh Fruits • Fresh Vegetables • Frozen Fruits • Frozen Vegetables • Canned Vegetables • Fruit Sauces (100% fruit with no added sugar, e.g., Unsweetened Apple Sauce) • Canned Fruits packed in water	• Non-par-fried, pre-cut potatoes • Low sodium chips (regular, baked, or extruded) corn chips, tortilla chips, veggie chips • Canned Fruits (packed in Juice) • Prepared pie filling • Processed fruit snacks (e.g., fruit leathers, fruit bars and gummies including those made with 100% fruit juice)
	<i>Avoid</i> • Canned Fruit in heavy syrup • Fruit cups in gelatin/jelly • Frozen fruit bars, popsicles or fruit-based freezies • Products that contain sugar substitutes, caffeine or natural health products • Products that are deep-fried • Battered and/or deep-fried vegetables • Par-fried French fries
Infrequent: Twice monthly (not consecutive weeks)	

Grain Foods	
<i>Offer Frequently</i>	<i>If Offering, serve infrequently and in smaller portions</i>
• Whole grains such as barley, rye, whole oats, or oatmeal (unsweetened), bulgur, quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, millet • Whole grain (or 100% whole wheat) bread products (bagels, bread, tortilla wraps, pitas, buns, Bannock, naan, pizza crust, flatbread etc.) • Whole grain brown rice or wild rice, plain • Whole grain noodles/pasta, plain	• White rice, pasta, and bread products (bagels, bread, tortilla wraps, pitas, buns, Bannock, naan, pizza crust, flatbread, croissants etc.) • Pre-seasoned noodles/pasta or rice • Canned rice or pasta • Low sodium cheezies, puffs, twists, crisps, straws, pretzels (regular, baked, or extruded) • Baked goods, *Homemade (from scratch)
	<i>Avoid</i> • Products that are deep-fried or contain sugar substitutes, caffeine, or natural health products • Energy bars, protein bars • Coated granola bars (e.g., covered in chocolate, etc.) • Toaster pastries • Sugary breakfast cereals (refined grains low in fiber with added sugar, color, and flavor)
*Aim to offer whole grains, when possible. School food programs are a great opportunity to expose students to a variety of foods, including whole grains. However, this does not mean that refined grains cannot be a nutritious option. In some cases, refined grains such as white rice, pasta, are culturally important foods. These foods can offer similar nutrition, especially when paired with high fiber foods such as vegetables, fruit, and beans. *Homemade (from scratch) to help control the sugar content and offers less processed alternatives than store bought. Infrequent: Twice monthly (not consecutive weeks) Infrequent: Twice monthly (not consecutive weeks)	

Protein	
<i>Offer Frequently</i>	<i>If Offering, serve infrequently and in smaller portions</i>
- Fresh/canned/dried legumes (beans, peas, lentils) - Hummus - Eggs - Tofu, tempeh - Fresh/frozen chicken, turkey - Fresh/frozen lean beef and pork - Wild game* - Extra lean or lean ground meat (e.g., chicken, turkey, beef, pork) - Fresh/frozen fish and shellfish - Deli meats*** (e.g. turkey, ham, chicken) - Canned fish - Hard cheese - Cottage cheese - Plain (unsweetened) yogurt (0-2%), Flavored yogurt less sugar - frozen yogurt - Plain (unsweetened & unsalted) nuts, seeds, nut butters and seed butters **	- Commercially battered and/or breaded meat, fish, chicken, turkey (e.g., chicken nuggets, chicken strips) - Hot dogs, wieners*** - Bacon*** - Sausages, pork breakfast links*** - Corned beef***
	<i>Avoid</i> - Beef jerky - Processed cheeses – spread, slices or sauce - Ice cream, frozen dessert - Milkshakes
*As approved by local Environmental Health Officer **Dependent on school food allergy policy ***Consider deli meats and sausages that are lower in saturated fat and sodium on an infrequent basis. Alternatives to bologna sandwich could include roasted chicken, turkey or beef, cheese, nut or seed butters, egg salad, tuna or salmon salad, hummus, and other bean-based alternatives. Infrequent: Twice Monthly (not consecutive weeks)	

Other Foods	
<i>Offer Frequently</i>	<i>If Offering, serve infrequently and in smaller portions</i>
Confectionery	
	- Gum* - Hard Candy* - Whipped cream (homemade where sugar content can be controlled)
	<i>Avoid</i> - Chocolate (bars or candies) - Fudge - Sweetened gelatin/jellied desserts - whipped dessert topping - Frozen treats - Candy - Products that are deep-fried or contain sugar substitutes, caffeine or natural health products
*Gum and hard candy can be used as a grounding tool to assist with self-regulation and to assist with increasing attention and focus as needed. Infrequent: Twice Monthly (not consecutive weeks)	
Condiments	
Offer, Serve or Sell	
Condiments can improve the taste and appeal of regular menu item. Wherever possible, offer lower sodium and lower saturated fat options.	

Beverages	
<i>Offer Frequently</i>	<i>If Offering, serve infrequently and in smaller portions</i>
• Water • Unsweetened carbonated or still water • Plain (unsweetened) Milk (0-2% MF) • Yogurt drinks (lightly sweetened) • Plain kefir (0-2%) • Kefir (0-2%) (lightly sweetened) • Caffeine free tea	<i>Avoid</i>
	• 100% fruit juice (no added sugar) • Sweetened milk • Soft drinks, diet soft drinks • Fruit flavored drinks (e.g., lemonade) • Flavored waters with added sugars • Sport/electrolyte replacement drinks • Energy drinks • Coffee, black tea (including iced tea, cold coffee beverages) • Hot chocolate • Sweetened flavored plant-based beverages • Milkshakes • Slushy drinks • Vitamin fortified water • Beverages containing sugar substitutes, added caffeine or natural health products
Infrequent: Twice Monthly (not consecutive weeks)	

For a meal (e.g. breakfast, lunch) offer at least:

- One fruit and/or vegetable
- One grain option
- One protein option

For a snack, offer at least:

- One protein option
- One fruit or vegetable or one grain
 - e.g. (protein + fruit/veg) or (protein + grain)

For both meals and snacks, consider offering one food or beverages that is an excellent source of calcium (at least 25% Daily Value on the nutritional facts table) and is fortified with Vitamin D (at least 10% of Daily Value), in addition to water.

Schools may use different program delivery models depending on their local infrastructure, staffing, capacity, and budget. Below are samples of 1-week menus for **GRAB & GO**, **ASSEMBLE AND SERVE**, and **COOK FROM SCRATCH** type of programs. Sample Menus are adapted from the draft BC School Food Toolkit website, which is not yet released. Additional resources including sample menus and recipes will also be available. Staff will be notified when the website goes live.

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU - GRAB & GO BREAKFAST

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Apple	Banana	Grab 'n' Go Yogurt parfait	Hard-boiled egg	Bagel
Cheese string	Whole grain bun	Plain milk or fortified alternative	Blueberry bran muffin	Cream cheese packet
Whole grain cracker packet	Seed butter packet		Fruit cup	Dried apple rings or raisin box
Plain milk or fortified alternative	Plain milk or fortified alternative		Plain milk (or fortified alternative)	Plain milk or fortified alternative

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU - GRAB & GO LUNCH

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Tuna cup	Banana	Apple	Pita	Bagel
Crackers	Wholegrain bun	Cheese	Hummus packet	Cream cheese packet
Orange	Seed butter packet	Wholegrain Bun	Mini cucumber	Dried apple rings
Milk or fortified alternative	Plain milk or fortified alternative	Plain milk or fortified alternative	Plain milk (or fortified alternative)	Plain milk or fortified alternative

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU - ASSEMBLE AND SERVE BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Toast Seed butter Banana Plain milk or fortified alternative	Bagel Cream cheese Orange slices Plain milk or fortified alternative	Granola Bar Yogurt Plain milk or fortified alternative	Fruit smoothie Toast Boiled eggs	Grab 'n' Go trail mix Milk or fortified alternative

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU – ASSEMBLE-AND-SERVE LUNCH PROGRAM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Turkey sandwich Orange Cherry tomatoes Milk or fortified alternative	Soup Cheese string Bun Apple Plain milk or fortified alternative	Whole grain crackers Cheese Banana Yogurt Plain Milk or fortified alternative	Pita Hummus packet Baby cukes Plain milk (or fortified alternative)	Bagel Cream cheese Dried cranberries Plain milk or fortified alternative

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU – COOKED FROM SCRATCH BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Toast Egg bites Sliced fruit Plain milk or fortified alternative	Bagel Cream cheese Orange slices Plain milk or fortified alternative	Oatmeal or whole grain cereal Yogurt Banana Plain milk or fortified alternative	Fruit smoothie Apple oatmeal muffin	Breakfast sandwich Milk or fortified alternative

SAMPLE 1 WEEK MENU – COOKED FROM SCRATCH LUNCH MENU

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grilled cheese Vegetable soup Milk or fortified alternative	Meat or Veg Chili Whole wheat bun Apple Milk or fortified alternative	Salmon chowder & bannock Apple Milk or fortified alternative	Chicken caesar wrap Grapes Tomatoes Milk (or fortified alternative)	Spaghetti & veggie Sauce Salad Milk or fortified alternative

For questions or additional support please contact:

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A Northern Health Population Health Dietitian is also available to support with school food program planning. For more information, email:

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