



DET Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services

POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to ensure school food services provide food and drinks which contribute to a supportive, healthy school environment.

SUMMARY

- A school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle supports learning and health outcomes for children and young people.
- Victorian government schools including primary, secondary, special and language schools, should support a healthy eating culture by developing a healthy school food services and promoting healthy eating principles. Schools should ensure healthy food choices are the major option made available to the school community by their school, and should never supply high sugar content drinks or confectionery.

Details

Background

School food services can have a major impact on the foods and drinks that students are exposed to and consume. Enjoyment of healthy foods and drinks has a wide range of positive benefits for student health and learning outcomes such as:

- providing important nutrients that students need to be alert and engaged in classroom
- activities and for healthy physical development and performance
- supporting the development of healthy eating habits and preferences
- paving the way for good health and prevention of chronic illness

It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating and build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods and drinks, and a healthy lifestyle.

A healthy school food service:

- makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- offers a variety of nutritious foods
- promotes foods that are consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines
- can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
- involves students, parents and the wider school community
- is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment

“A united community where everybody has responsibility in preparing youth for their future.”

CHALLENGE EMPOWERMENT RESILIENCE RESPECT



It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods and drinks, and a healthy lifestyle.

To support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating schools should:

- work with parents, teachers and students to promote healthy eating practices
- apply a healthy eating approach to all food and drink services provided to the school community by the school
- ensure healthy food choices are made available to the school community by their school
- ensure EVERYDAY food and drinks are always available as the main choices and SELECT CAREFULLY food and drinks are selected carefully and limit the availability of OCCASIONALLY food and drinks. (refer to [Guidance tab](#) for details on these food categories)
- never supply:
 - high sugar content drinks such as energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters with high sugar content
 - confectionery such as chocolate, lollies, yoghurt compound and coatings, fudge and chewing gum (refer to [Resources](#) for the School Confectionary Guidelines)
- ensure curriculum programs promote a healthy eating approach

The policy applies to

- all foods and drinks provided in the following areas within the school environment:
 - school canteens and contracted school food services
 - external businesses and retail food outlets supplying schools (for example, milk bars, cafes and bakeries)
 - vending machines
 - school curriculum activities
 - rewards and incentives
 - school sporting days, social events and productions
 - school-based breakfast programs
 - outside school hours care programs on school grounds

This policy does not apply to:

- foods and drinks used for the management of individual student's health conditions
- student lunches and snacks brought from home
- student birthday celebrations
- non-school-related events and activities managed by external organisations on school grounds, for example community sport
- school camps

Special dietary requirements

Some students may require special diets for medical reasons. The school food service should try to meet these needs as far as possible so that all children can enjoy eating a healthy lunch from the canteen. Any special

“A united community where everybody has responsibility in preparing youth for their future.”
CHALLENGE EMPOWERMENT RESILIENCE RESPECT



needs for children with disabilities such as modified texture diets or wheelchair access to the canteen should also be considered.

The school principal, child's teacher or parents should provide advice of any special dietary needs to canteen staff.

Anaphylactic (severe) food allergy

Contact with certain foods (such as peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soy bean, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) can be fatal for people with allergies to these foods. The Department has guidelines for schools to support students with anaphylaxis, refer to: [Anaphylaxis](#).

Canteen staff need to be aware of students with such allergies and be familiar with the school's management strategies for these students.

Role of school council

Many schools have contractual arrangements in relation to their canteens and while these arrangements need to be honored, councils should discuss with licensees ways in which canteens can be compliant with Department policy. Schools that have a specific relationship with a retail shop, for example a local milk bar, also need to consider how the policy can be applied.

Refer to [Finance Manual Section 12 Trading Operations](#) for further detail on the role of school council in engaging a third party to operate school canteens.

Definitions

Confectionery

Confectionery can be defined as a small snack, chocolate or lolly — often sized for individual consumption — of minimal nutritional value and with sugar as a main ingredient. Common names for confectionery include lollies, candy or sweets. Confectionery comes in a variety of shapes, textures from jelly-like, soft and chewy to hard and brittle.

Related policies

- [Finance Manual — Section 12 Trading Operations](#)
- [Food Handling in Canteens](#)
- [Procurement — Schools](#)

Related legislation

- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
- [Food Act 1984 \(Vic\)](#)

“A united community where everybody has responsibility in preparing youth for their future.”
CHALLENGE EMPOWERMENT RESILIENCE RESPECT