

## Putting Policy Into Action: A Guide to Getting Started with School Healthy Eating Policies

An elementary school healthy eating policy has been adopted by the Eastern School District and will soon be adopted by the Western School Board and the Commission scolaire de langue française.

Here are some ideas on how to get started changing policy into action!

### 1. Form a School Nutrition Team

Forming a *School Nutrition Team* is a great way to share the load of putting the new healthy eating policy into action.

It is good idea to involve 2 or more representatives from different areas of the school community such as an administrator, teacher, person involved with school lunch, Home and School representative/parent, or a student. This team can review the policy, decide what changes need to be made, and monitor the changes.



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### 2. Review the Policy

Take the time to review the policy and decide what you need to change. Most schools are already meeting many of the regulations. Changes may include:

- *Time for students to eat their lunch* - the regulations state that students should have 20 minutes to eat. Some schools allow students to play first and eat later. When students come in to eat their lunch they are allowed to continue eating during a silent reading period.

*Food sold at school* - foods like regular hot dogs, pepperoni pizza, and fried chicken nuggets should now only be served no more than 1-2 times a month. There are lots of alternatives that are kid-friendly and healthy - the first two issues of the Healthy EatS Newsbites outlines what some schools are serving. A number of schools are having success offering baked potatoes, which is a great way to support our local farmers! Check out the Guide to Food Choices (the appendix of the Nutrition Regulations) for more information about foods served at school.

### 3. Implement and Monitor Changes

Now it's time for action! As you implement the policy it is important to keep an eye on how things are going and adapt as necessary. For example, the School Nutrition Team may notice that the sale of apples has been poor since they were introduced to the canteen. The Team may decide to try apple slices instead.

### 4. Use the School Healthy Eating Toolkit

All elementary and consolidated schools have received a copy of the School Healthy Eating Toolkit. This resource was prepared by the Healthy Eating Alliance to help schools implement the policy. Check out the document called "*School Food Program Ideas*" on page 5-1 or all of Section 3 for alternatives to selling chocolate bars for fundraising.

We would like your feedback on the Toolkit. Section 10 of the Toolkit contains an evaluation form.

The Toolkit was made possible through financial contributions from the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Diabetes Strategy.



The PEI Healthy Eating Alliance is here to support you as you make these changes to

encourage healthier living. Mary Acorn is a Registered Dietitian who works with the Alliance as the Co-Ordinator of the School Healthy Eating Policy Project. Mary is able to work with schools as changes are made. She can be reached at [macorn@upeii.ca](mailto:macorn@upeii.ca) or **894-2819**.

### INFORM PARENTS

To help inform parents of the new policy, there are a couple of templates ('*Letter to Parents Explaining Policy*' on page 2-12 and '*Summary of Policy for School Newsletters and Handbooks*' on page 2-13) in the Toolkit that you can tailor to your needs. Although the policy is not intended to control food sent from home, it is a good idea to let parents know that the school will be doing its part in promoting healthy eating.

Special thanks to the PEI Department of Health for their generous financial contributions to the School Healthy Eating Policy Project since 2003.



We plan to continue producing the "Healthy EatS Newsbites", but we need your help. Send us your ideas for future issues.