

Merton's Nutrition Policy

Healthy Minds in Healthy Bodies

Policy Statement

During the school year, in the context of new Government mandates to address childhood health problems including child obesity, lack of physical activity and high rates of diabetes, Merton School initiated a number of measures to reduce the amount of sugary foods and unhealthy snacks consumed in school and to increase physical activity among students.

This Merton Nutrition Policy, in line with the English Montreal School Board Nutrition Policy, aims to promote health-enhancing attitudes and behaviors amongst students by teaching the essential knowledge and skills needed to make nutritious food choices, and by providing an environment which encourages healthy eating habits. Specifically, we will restrict the opportunities students have to consume sugary foods and unhealthy snacks unnecessarily without their parents' knowledge.

Objectives of the Policy

We adopt the following objectives of the EMSB Nutrition Policy:

- To increase the nutritional knowledge of all students
- To improve the nutritional intake of all students by offering nutritious foods
- To ensure the safety of all students by monitoring the quality of the food offered
- To decrease the availability of high sugar content foods.
- To decrease the availability of high fat content foods and eliminate foods containing Trans fats.

In addition, we aim to:

- Give parents more control over the nutritional intake of their children by assuring them that they will not be consuming sugary foods or unhealthy snacks in school over and above what parents may decide to provide at home.
- Support a mindful approach to celebrations that is not limited to the consumption of food.

Scope of the policy

This policy will apply to all ongoing regular school activities, including those that take place during school hours, after school, and during lunchtime. Once a year events such as parent lectures, Graduation, the School BBQ, and others may be exempted, as **frequency** is an important criteria in the EMSB nutrition policy.

Practical Implications and specific guidelines

The following areas of school life are most likely to be affected by the present policy:

Birthday Celebrations

Students celebrating their birthday will have a personal “free dress” day. In addition, each classroom teacher may plan particular ways to celebrate birthdays and will communicate them to the parents. *No food will be part of our in-school birthday celebrations.*

Holiday Celebrations

Halloween, December Holidays, Valentine’s and other classroom parties will strictly observe the school policy. Teachers will make their own decisions as to whether healthy snacks will be allowed or other (non-edible) ways to celebrate will be preferred, and they will communicate those decisions to parents. *In particular, our “candy-less” Halloween will be maintained.*

Fundraising

Bake sales will be accommodated twice a year together with our book sales, but will only be conducted after school hours when parents can make choices for their children. **Pizza Days** will continue, as they only take place once a month and only cheese pizza is served. **Cupcakes** will no longer be sold by Home and School. There will be **no hotdog lunches** organized by Home and School, and chips will not be part of any meal served in school. As the EMSB policy states, fundraising that is not conducted on school premises is excluded from this Nutrition Policy.

Parent Involvement

Parent partnership is an invaluable asset to our school and to each individual child. Understanding that this policy has the best interest of students at heart, we expect and count on the support of every parent. In turn, we will respect the choices that parents make regarding the food sent in their children’s lunchboxes and not single out students for the food they bring to school for their own consumption. We retain the right to guide our students as to the order in which they may consume their food (choosing a fruit for snack and keeping a granola bar for dessert, for example) and to communicate with parents when serious concerns about the contents of a lunchbox, or lack thereof, arise. However, **it must be clear that candy, chips and chocolate bars are never acceptable. Furthermore, parents may not send any food to school to be shared with the class unless specifically requested to do so, and any sugary foods or unhealthy snacks sent to school to be shared with the class will be returned to the parents.** Please help us avoid unpleasant situations by adhering to this policy.

Appendix:

Foods which will not be offered to students during school hours and after school activities include:

- French Fries, chips, nachos, commercially pre-fried foods, e.g. nuggets, etc.
- High fat luncheon meats, e.g. pepperoni, bacon, salami, bologna, etc.
- Hot-dogs, pogos
- Cupcakes, cakes, donuts, pastries, chocolatinés or danishes
- Sweetened Popcorn, gum
- Chocolate, candies, cream-filled or coated cookies, cakes and bars
- Cereals with more than 8g of sugar per 30g portion
- Artificially or sugar sweetened beverages (soft drinks, energy drinks, fruit punch, hot chocolate made from powder, etc.)
- Foods with a high salt content such as salted peanuts, nuts and pretzels, chips, nachos, buttered popcorn etc.

Home-made Muffins, Cookies, Cakes and Cereal Bars are acceptable as part of the twice a year bake sale mentioned above. Baked goods made from whole wheat flour and fruit should be preferred.

Resources:

EMSB Nutrition Policy: http://www.emsb.qc.ca/nutrition/pdf/Nutrition%20Policy%202010_Eng.pdf

MELS Framework policy on healthy eating and active living :

http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/Goingt_othehealthyrouteatschool_policyframework_AN.pdf

Policies and Guidelines Shaping the School Food Environment (published by Ontario Public Health Association):

http://opha.on.ca/getmedia/f236fa5f-fce2-4beb-a5ea-e2e474a65957/Policies-and-Guidelines-Shaping-the-School-Food-Envt_Lit-Review_NRC_Aug_2015.pdf.aspx