

Appendix 2: Merton's Nutrition Policy

Healthy Minds in Healthy Bodies

Policy Statement

During the 2017-2018 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, Christmas, Hanukkah, Valentine's and other holiday 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, chokolatines 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 sales 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/Goingtothehealthyrouteatschool_policyframework_AN.pdf

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



Commission scolaire English-Montréal

English Montreal School Board

Helpful information on food labelling...

In Canada, the most common allergens (eggs, mustard, milk, peanuts, seafood, sesame, soy, sulfites, tree nuts and wheat) must be clearly declared on the product label.

Claims or symbols are not government regulated. The **Allergen Control™** program is the only allergen control certification program recognized by Health Canada. Their logo can be found on specific manufactured products that offer the best possible protection to consumers.



FOOD ALLERGIES

PEANUT, TREE NUT, EGG, FISH, AND OTHER ALLERGENS

Dear Parents,

Some students in our school have serious food allergies, where even trace amounts of a food allergen (e.g. from peanut, tree nuts, eggs, fish, etc.) can trigger a severe reaction (anaphylaxis).

Providing a safe environment for our students is our priority. To help maintain our school “**ALLERGY SAFE**” and reduce the risk of unfortunate events, all students are asked to:

- ✓ Prioritize **VEGETABLES and FRUITS** as snacks.
- ✓ Ensure **HAND-WASHING** before and after eating
- ✓ Practice the “**NO SHARING FOOD**” rule; including utensils, containers and water bottles
- ✓ Ensure no eating in **SCHOOL BUSES**

As the absence of allergens in foods offered through various programs and activities cannot be guaranteed, parents of children with allergies are reminded to provide allergen-free foods from home if they opt not to participate in these programs/activities. Furthermore, parents are advised to evaluate all risks associated with using the school cafeteria and outside food suppliers to make an informed decision on the use of these services.

Students with severe food allergies should eat at their assigned “reserved” seating in the lunchroom. They should ensure cleaning (using cleaning wipes) of their meal surface area before eating and use a place mat to set their food (cleaning wipes and place mats to be provided by parents). Moreover, students are encouraged to use isothermal containers (thermos) for hot meals and refrain from using microwave ovens.

As providing a safe environment for our students is a major concern, we wish to remind all parents that an **allergen-free environment cannot be guaranteed in our school as complete avoidance of all allergens is not possible**. If at any time a student feels at risk in the possible presence of an allergen, he/she should immediately go to a safe area and report to a responsible adult.

Parents of students with food allergies are reminded to inform the school Principal of their child’s allergy and ensure that auto-injectors are readily available and replaced before the expiration date.

Thank you for helping us maintain our school “**ALLERGY SAFE**”.

Your Principal and School Board Dietitian



Canada's food guide

Health Canada released Canada's new food guide in January 2019

Have plenty of vegetables and fruits

What about milk?

- Milk and dairy products are now considered protein foods
- They remain an important source of vitamin D and calcium, especially for children
- Milk is also a source of hydration

Promoting Healthy Eating at School

Eat a variety of healthy foods every day

The English Montreal School Board Nutrition Policy aims at promoting healthy lifestyle habits through nutritious food choices and physical activity. Feeding the body and mind daily with nutritious foods benefits healthy growth and academic success! For more information on the Nutrition Policy, visit the Nutrition and Food Services website at www.emsb.qc.ca/emsb/services/support-services/nutrition

Eat protein foods



Choose whole grain foods

Tips to stay hydrated with water

- Pack and carry a reusable water bottle
- Drink water at meal and snack time
- For flavor, add fruit or herbs to water (e.g. mint, strawberries, pear ...)
- If you like fizz, try carbonated water
- Drink water during and after playing sports or being active

Make water your drink of choice



Key messages

- The Eat Well Plate allows you to easily see how to create a balanced meal. At every meal, aim to fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits, a quarter with protein foods and a quarter with whole grain foods. Eating a variety of foods provide various nutrients needed to grow, learn and be healthy.
- Examples of protein foods include legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu, fortified soy beverage, fish, shellfish, eggs, poultry, lean red meat, lower fat milk, lower fat yogurts, lower fat kefir, and cheeses lower in fat.
- Healthy eating goes beyond the foods on your plate. Being mindful of your eating habits, cooking more often, enjoying your food and eating meals with others are all important parts of healthy eating.
- Being mindful of your eating habits includes being aware of and eating according to your feelings of hunger and fullness. As children can become full quickly, snacks are important to ensure they are meeting their nutritional needs.