

Policy title: ACT PUBLIC SCHOOL FOOD AND DRINK POLICY

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Legislation:

Food Act 2001 (ACT)

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (Cth)

Fair Work Act 2009

Food Regulation 2002 (ACT)

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Children and Young People (ACT) Act 2008

Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) ACT) 2011

Supporting documents:

- *Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013*
- *National Healthy School Canteens: Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens 2013 (National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines)*
- *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy implementation support materials*
- *ACT Government Towards Zero Growth Healthy Weight Action Plan*

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. Principals are responsible for ensuring that the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* are applied to the sale of food and drinks in school canteens and to all ACT public school activities and events. The *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* use a traffic light system to categorise food and drinks according to their nutritional value and levels of energy, saturated fat, fibre, sugar and salt. The Traffic Light System is as follows:

GREEN food and drinks are the best choices. They should always be available, displayed in prominent areas, and actively promoted and encouraged. **GREEN** foods and drinks form the basis of a healthy diet. **GREEN** foods and drinks offer a wide range of nutrients and are generally low in saturated fat, sugar and salt.

AMBER foods and drinks should be selected carefully. They should not dominate the food and drink choices displayed or promoted. **AMBER** foods and drinks contribute some valuable nutrients, but contain moderate amounts saturated fat, sugar and/or salt and may be low in fibre. **AMBER** food and drinks may contribute to excess intake of energy (kilojoules/calories) if consumed in large quantities.

RED foods and drinks should not be provided or sold in schools. **RED** foods and drinks are low in nutritional value and fibre and may be high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt. **RED** foods and drinks may also provide excess energy (kilojoules/calories).

Adapted from the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines 2013*.

- 1.2. Sugary drinks are not permitted to be sold in ACT public school canteens.
- 1.3. Food and drink vending machines are not permitted on ACT public school sites.
- 1.4. The following exemptions apply to food and drink:
 - Food and drinks sold at occasional fetes, fundraisers and school events no more than twice per term although healthier alternatives are encouraged.
 - Food and drinks supplied from home, including birthday cakes.
 - Curriculum-related cooking and food-technology courses (schools are strongly encouraged to consider the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* when making curriculum decisions with regard to cooking and food-technology).
- 1.5. Principals are responsible for individual variations to the implementation of exemptions to the policy. They may allow individual exemptions on a case by case basis for students with medical or cultural restrictions to allow them access to commonly available foods at the school canteen.
- 1.6. Schools are also encouraged to apply the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* (including the Traffic Light System) when foods and drinks are provided to students participating in off-site school activities, such as excursions or school sports carnivals.
- 1.7. Principals are responsible for ensuring that religious and cultural practices are considered where foods and drinks are provided at school events and activities.
- 1.8. Principals are responsible for meeting the requirements of the *ACT Education and Training Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy 2003* to ensure that food allergies, intolerances and medical conditions (such as anaphylaxis) are managed where foods and drinks are provided at school events and activities.
- 1.9. Principals are responsible for ensuring that RED category food and drink items are not used as rewards or incentives for student learning.
- 1.10. Staff in ACT public schools are encouraged to support the Policy by not consuming RED category foods and drinks in view of students.
- 1.11. Principals are required to enter into a current ACT Government licence agreement with any canteen operating on school premises by the end of 2015. Canteen licence agreements and advice can be obtained by contacting Strategic Finance on (02) 6205 9115. As part of the Agreement:
 - 1.11.1. School canteens must be registered as a food business and meet the requirements for the safe handling and sale of food under the *Food Act 2001 (ACT)*.
 - 1.11.2. School canteens are subject to the requirements of the *Food Act 2001 (ACT)*, *Food Regulation ACT 2002 (ACT)* and *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*. These may include inspection and reporting requirements, where relevant.

- 1.11.3. Principals and all canteen operators must meet their responsibilities under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011(ACT)*, the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)* and the *Fair Work Act 2009*.
- 1.11.4. School canteens will be subject to an annual menu review by an external agency to assess the food and drinks provided and for sale against the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*.
- 1.12. Schools are encouraged to access professional advice to support them in the implementation of the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy* through nutrition advisory services.
- 1.13. Principals, in conjunction with School Boards, will provide the schools' Parents and Citizens Associations with the opportunity to operate the school canteen at the end of the contract period.

2. RATIONALE

- 2.1. This policy has been developed to promote a consistent, whole school approach to the provision and sale of healthy food and drinks in ACT public schools.
- 2.2. The ACT Education and Training Directorate recognises that childhood is a time when attitudes about food and eating behaviours are formed. Once a child begins school, the school environment plays a role in influencing children's food preferences.
- 2.3. The links between health and education are well established. Healthy children are better able to learn, and higher levels of educational achievement are associated with better health.
- 2.4. Food and nutrition education in ACT public schools is taught as part of the curriculum. This provides students with opportunities to learn about food production, the benefits of healthy eating, nutritionally sound choices, and preparation of healthy foods.
- 2.5. This policy replaces the *School Canteen Policy published in 2012* and the *School Canteens Policy Implementation Procedures 2012*.
- 2.6. The *Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013* use the best available scientific evidence to provide information on the types and amounts of foods and drinks that promote health and wellbeing, reduce the risk of diet-related conditions, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.
- 2.7. The *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* are consistent with the types and amounts of foods and drinks recommended for children and young people in the *Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013*. The *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* use a Traffic Light System to categorise foods and drinks according to their nutritional value and levels of energy, fibre, saturated fat, sugar and salt.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. **Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013:** provides advice about the amounts and kinds of foods required to maintain health and wellbeing.
- 3.2. **National Healthy School Canteens: Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens (updated) 2013:** have been designed for use in school canteens, and provide useful guidance for other school activities where foods and drinks are provided or sold. This policy applies the *National Healthy Schools Canteen Guidelines* to all school activities.
- 3.3. **Parents and Citizens Association:** is a school-based organisation open to parents, teachers and community members.
- 3.4. **School Canteen:** is a food business/food service provider that supplies foods and drinks for sale to a school population, primarily on the school premises during school hours.
- 3.5. **Traffic Light System:** The *National Healthy School Canteens: Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens 2013* uses a Traffic Light System to categorise foods and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED depending on their nutritional value and levels of saturated fat, sugar and salt.

4. LEGISLATION

4.1. **Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code**

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code provides standards to ensure food in Australia and New Zealand is safe and suitable for human consumption. It includes standards for food additives, food safety, labelling and foods that need pre-approval such as genetically modified (GM) foods.

4.2. **Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)**

The *Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)* provides for the wellbeing, care and protection of children and young people in a way that:

- recognises their right to grow in a safe and stable environment
- takes into account the responsibilities of parents, families, the community and the whole of government
- ensures that children and young people are provided with a safe and nurturing environment by organisations and people who, directly or indirectly, provide for their wellbeing, care and protection.

4.3. **Fair Work Act 2009**

The Fair Work Act 2009 covers workplace relations and such matters as the payment of award wages, record keeping and the various rights and obligations of employers and their employees.

4.4. **Food Act 2001 (ACT) and the Food Regulation 2002 (ACT)**

The *Food Act 2001 (ACT)* and the *Food Regulation 2002 (ACT)* regulate the sale of food for human consumption, and for other purposes. The *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy*, and supporting materials align with the *Food Act* by:

- ensuring food for sale is safe and suitable for consumption
- preventing misleading conduct in relation to the sale of food
- adopting the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Although the *Food Act 2001* applies to school canteens, it may not apply to food sales by volunteers for a Parents and Citizens Association for the purposes of fundraising. Details of exemptions for non-profit community organisations can be found in the *Food Act 2001*, or by contacting the Health Protection Service on 6205 1700 or hps@act.gov.au.

4.5. **Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT)**

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT) aims to secure and promote work safety, eliminate risks to work safety at the source, to protect people at work from injury and illness, to foster cooperation and consultation between employers and workers and to provide a framework for continuous improvement and higher standards of work safety.

4.6. **Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT)**

The Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 (ACT) provides a requirement for background checking as part of a risk assessment of persons seeking to work with vulnerable people, and aims to reduce the risk of harm or neglect to vulnerable people in the ACT.

5. **COMPLAINTS**

5.1. Where there are concerns regarding the application of the Policy or the Policy itself, contact should be made:

- with the school Principal in the first instance
- with the Learning and Teaching Branch, on (02) 6205 9205 as the policy owners
- with the ACT Education and Training Directorate's Liaison Unit on (02) 6205 5429 or ETD.Liaison@act.gov.au, or
- by accessing the Education and Training Directorate's *Complaints Policy*, which is available on the [Directorate's website](#).

6. **POLICY OWNER**

6.1. Director, Learning and Teaching

6.2. For support in relation to this policy please contact Learning and Teaching Branch on (02) 6205 9205.

7. RELATED POLICIES

- 7.1. *ACT Education and Training Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy 2003, Appendix E (1), (2), & (3) provides a framework for the management of anaphylaxis in the school environment.*
- 7.2. *ACT Health's Healthy Food and Drink Choices Policy has adapted the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines for use with adults as well as children.*
- 7.3. *Corporate Sponsorship School Policy 2001*
- 7.4. *Visitors in Schools Framework – Policy and Procedures*
- 7.5. *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteers and Visitors (interim) Policy*