

**COMPULSORY
STANDARDS**

For

Healthy

School Lunch



Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Definition of Terms	5
Good Nutrition Standards For School Lunch	7
<i>Part I – Nutrition Standards for Meal Planning</i>	9
Cereals and starchy vegetables	10
Fruit	11
Vegetables	12
Meats and Dairy	13
Fats and Oils	15
Sweets, Sugars and Salts	16
Foods of Minimal Nutrition Value	17
<i>Part II – Food Safety</i>	19
Food Hygiene	21
Food Poisoning	22
<i>Part III - Personal Hygiene & Dress Code</i>	
Personal Hygiene	23
Dress Code	25
Principal Resource Persons	26
Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas	27

INTRODUCTION

Schools are in a powerful position to influence children's lifelong dietary practices. Good nutrition is just as important as good grades. Therefore, it is important that school lunch vendors provide healthy food choices.

Achievements in academics and athletics are often indicators of a school's success. Research has shown that good nutrition helps to boost academic and athletic success. Students who eat healthy meals are better able to concentrate during their lessons and are more likely to perform and behave well in school. Lunch therefore, is an important part of school life.

Studies show that the food children and adults eat affects their health and well-being in major ways. Poor eating habits in children and adolescents are linked to poor cognitive abilities, behavioral problems, overweight and obesity. The Bahamas Living Condition Survey (BLCS) 2001 showed that 14% of children ages 2-10 years and 9% of the adolescent population ages 11-20 years are overweight. The critical matter here is that overweight children are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults. Being overweight increases their risk for nutrition-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and some cancers. The onset of these diseases begins in childhood and adolescence. Research shows that good eating practices established in early childhood are normally transferred into adulthood, therefore decreasing the risk of nutrition - related diseases.

The Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch guides lunch vendors to offer students attractive, nutritious and safe lunch choices based on the Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas. These Standards also aim to promote the principles and practices of good nutrition in the school community which will in turn positively influence the overall health and well being of students, families and the wider community.

By implementing these standards, school lunch vendors will join in with national efforts to create a healthy eating environment in the schools.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions apply to the Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch.

“Boils”: Refers to vegetables that are *commonly* prepared together by boiling. Most of these types of vegetables are starchy, such as pumpkin, sweet potato, cassava and plantain. However, non-starchy vegetables such as carrots and cabbage can be prepared as “boils”.

Competitive Foods: Refers to any food or beverage that is sold or made available to the student on campus that competes with the Tuck Shop or lunch vendor.

Cross-contamination: is the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food to another. This may be directly, or via chopping board, utensils, hands etc.

Fillings: Sweet creams, jams, etc. spread between baked layers in cakes, rolls or shaped into yeast-raised items.

Food Danger Zone: Food temperatures between 41°F and 140°F.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV): Refers to the categories of food restricted by the Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch. These foods include, but are not limited to beverages such as soda, fruit drinks, Kool-Aid baggies and cups, popsicle made with fruit drinks, chewing gum, candy, chocolate bars are restricted.

Fried Foods: Foods that are cooked by total immersion into hot oil or other fat, commonly referred to as “deep fat frying”. This definition does not include foods that are stir-fried or sautéed.

Fruit or Vegetable Drink: Refers to beverages labeled as containing less than 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Fruit or Vegetable Juice: Refers to beverages labeled as containing 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Meat Alternative: Refers to vegetable- and grain-based foods with a meat-like texture that can be used to replace meat.

Red meat: Refers to meat which is red-colored when raw.

Safe food: Foods that is free from bacteria or other harmful organisms that can cause one to become sick.

Sanitize: Using heat or chemicals to kill disease-causing bacteria.

Starchy Foods: Refers to foods that are composed mainly of complex carbohydrates such as rice, grits, pasta/macaroni, bread, dried beans and peas, flour, plantain, green bananas.

Starchy Vegetables: Refers to vegetables such as pumpkin, corn, potato, cassava, sweet potato.

Trans Fat: Is vegetable oil converted into solid saturated fats through a chemical process called hydrogenation. Trans fat increases the risk for heart disease.

Tran fats are found in margarine, shortening, commercially baked goods (doughnuts, twists, cookies, chips etc) frozen french fries and many other processed foods.

Good Nutrition Standards For School Lunch

Assuring that school lunch vendors offer *healthy lunch* choices on schools campuses is just one way that the Ministry of Education, can make an impact in helping to improve children's and adolescents' diet and knowledge of *healthy eating*. It is recognized that school lunch vendors have the challenging role of offering low cost nutritious lunch and desserts items while operating at a reasonable profit. The types of foods sold by the lunch vendor should not be in contradiction with the Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas or nutrition education taught in the classroom. Lunch and desserts offered by the school lunch vendor should encourage students to:

- Eat healthier
- Sample new healthy foods
- Put into practice what they learned in the classroom

In keeping with the recommendations as set out in the Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas, the objectives of School Lunch Guidelines are as follows

- To achieve energy balance
- To increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- To limit intake of fat
- To limit intake of sugar
- To limit intake of salt
- To maintain proper growth and development
- To achieve and maintain good health

Further, the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), in the Port of Spain Declaration (2007) states, "*we will mandate the re-introduction of physical education in our schools where necessary, provide incentives and resources to effect this policy and ensure that our education sectors promote programmes aimed at providing healthy school meals and promote healthy eating.*" (Emphasis added)

Who are the users of the School Lunch Standards?

These standards serve as a reference for the Ministry of Education's schools, administrators, teachers, parents, and school lunch vendors. The target users of the standards are the school lunch

How can the School Lunch Standards for Vendors be used?

- To define food requirements for school lunch
- To assure compliance
- To plan menus
- As a guide for purchasing foods
- As a guide for food preparation

Requirements for School Lunch

✓ Foods high in fat and sugar contribute to the problem of childhood obesity and other nutrition-related conditions. Additionally, foods high in sugar also contribute to dental caries.

Compulsory Standards for Healthy School Lunch must be adhered to at all times:

- Only food items approved in the Standards can be sold by the lunch vendor.
- School lunch vendors **may not** serve or provide access to Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) (see Definition of Terms) at anytime on the school campus.
- A balance plate is inclusive of starchy foods, protein (meat or meat alternative) and vegetables. Where one dish meals are served they should represent the balanced plate.
- ✓ Foods high in fat and sugar **must not be sold**.
- All food vendors and their assistants must have a valid Food Handler's Health Certificate.
- Foods must be prepared and served in a clean, attractive and sanitized environment under the principles of the Food Handler's Programme offered by the Ministry of Health.
- All foods must be kept at the safe temperature zone (see Definition of Terms), that is when the temperature of the food is colder than 41° F or hotter than 140° F.
- All foods **must be** stored and served from separate containers or receptacles with tightly fitted covers to reduce cross contamination (see Definition of Terms) and food poisoning.
- All foods **must be** served in sanitary receptacles (e.g. wax paper, napkins, plastic ware or foil).
- All foods **must be** served using individual utensils.

Part I

Nutrition Standards

for

Meal Planning

This part of the guidelines specifies the quality of food items to be served and the frequency for which they are to be served. The primary aim is to prevent students from consuming too much fat, sugar and salt. It covers the following areas:

- Good eating practices to be adopted.
- Food items to be encouraged.
- Food items that should be limited.
- Rationale for guidelines.

Cereals and Starchy Vegetables

Foods in this group come from grains like wheat, oats, rice, rye and corn. Dietary Guideline number three advises, "Make starchy vegetables, peas and beans part of your diet."

Requirements:

- At least one starchy food (see definition) must be served every day and available throughout the lunch service.
- French Fries must be baked and not include Trans fat.
- Peas "N" Rice or Bean "N" Rice must be served at least once per week. Other options may include pumpkin, okras, vegetables, corn. All foods must be prepared without salt pork, salt beef, bacon or coconut milk/oil.
- Grits may be substituted for rice if preferred.
- Pasta dishes may be served as a starch choice or main dish.
- Vendors are to prepare macaroni and cheese must without the addition of butter or margarine and can be served once per week.
- Root vegetables such as potato, cassava, yam and pumpkin, plantain and other boils may be served as a starch choice.
- Potato preparation method options include boiling, broiling, grilling, mashed or used in salads.

Rationale

Starchy foods are usually inexpensive and provide energy, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Starchy foods that are cooked by deep fat frying, by adding excess cooking oil, or using the fatty part of the meat, increases the amount of calories. Using less oil and eliminating fatty meats, not only decrease the amount of calories, but also reduces the amount of cholesterol in the meals of children.



Fruit

Fruit comes from the flower and contain the seeds of the plant. Fruit is sweet because of the natural sugar it contains. Fruit juices belong to this group but have much lower fiber content than fresh fruit. Dietary Guidelines number 5 states, "Choose a variety of fruit and vegetables everyday."

Requirements

- At least one serving of fresh fruit must be available everyday.
- As often as possible, include all available native Bahamian fruit in the selection of fresh fruits served.
- Canned fruits in light syrup, fruit juice or in its own juice may be served as an alternative to fresh fruits.
- Do not use fruit products with added sugars in the ingredient list.

Rationale

Fruits provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They are also a tasty alternative to high calorie desserts. Include locally grown foods on the menu as this encourages the consumption and appreciation of local produce.



Vegetables

Vegetables comes from many different parts of the plant including the leaves, roots, tubers, flowers, stems, seeds and shoots. Dietary Guidelines number 5 states, "Choose a variety of fruit and vegetables everyday."

Requirements:

- At least one serving of fresh or frozen vegetable or vegetable salad must be served every day.
- If corn is served, another vegetable option must be offered. Corn is a starchy vegetable.
- Soups and other main course dishes must contain a minimum of one serving ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup non leafy, 1 cup leafy) of vegetables.
- Soups **must not** be prepared with bacon, ham, or left over fat.
- Do not use vegetables products with hydrogenated fats (Trans Fats) or partially hydrogenated fats in the ingredients list.

Rationale

Vegetables are a good source of:

- Vitamins and minerals (which help to fight infections).
- Carbohydrates (which supply energy).
- Fiber (that help to prevent constipation and help lower blood cholesterol levels).

is especially important that children consume at least five servings of vegetables or fruits daily promote good health and well-being.



Fish, Poultry, Meat and Meat Alternatives

There are a wide variety of protein foods in this group. It contains all poultry (chicken, turkey etc), fish and other seafood, beef, mutton, pork, eggs, legumes (dried beans and peas), nuts and peanut butter. Dietary Guideline number two states, "Limit the amount of high fat and greasy foods you eat." To help achieve this, extra fat and skin on meats and meat products should be trimmed and low fat cooking methods (baking, roasting, broiling) should be chosen.

Requirements

- At least one serving from this group must be offered every day and throughout the lunch service.
- Meats must be prepared as baked, roasted, grilled, broiled, or boiled. **No fried meats are allowed, except for fish.**
- Fish must be served at least once per week. In the Primary schools, fish with bones **must not** be served.
- Red meat may be served with meals a minimum of two times per week but not more than three times per week.
- Only gravy formed from the meats during cooking can be served. **No additional fat must be added to the gravy.**
- Fatty meats such as sausage, salami and bologna, **must not** be served.



Rationale

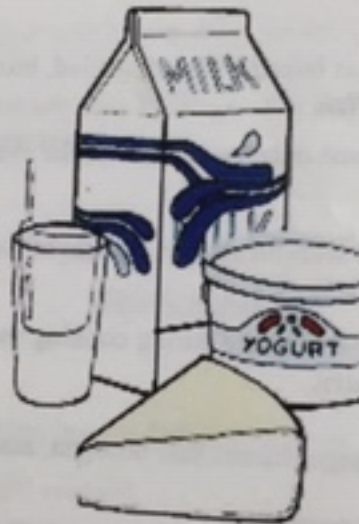
Meats and meat alternatives such as peas and beans are a major source of protein, vitamins, and minerals including iron. Low iron intake negatively affects the mental ability of the child, by making understanding difficult. Meat alternatives add variety to the vegetarian's (one who does not eat meat or animal products) diets.

Dairy

Milk, yogurt, cheese and pudding are found in this group. These foods also contain protein for growth and repair, carbohydrates for energy as well as some vitamins and minerals.

Requirements:

- At least one serving from this food group must be offered every day.
- Cheese may be offered as a substitute for meat in the meat/poultry/fish/meat alternative group.



Rationale

Milk and dairy products are excellent sources of several nutrients, including calcium, which is important for good bone and teeth development, protein and vitamins.

Fats and Oils

The Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas advises, "As often as possible limit the amount of high fat and greasy foods you eat."

Requirements:

- Do not use leftover fats, especially for frying, or drippings to prepare foods.
- If oil is needed in the preparation of foods, only vegetable oil must be used in small amounts.
- Low fat salad dressing must be used as far as possible.
- Choose oils, dressings and spreads containing monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.
- Do not use products that list saturated fats, hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats towards the beginning of the ingredients.
- To prevent food infections and food poisoning, salads such as cole slaw and tossed salad must not be prepared with mayonnaise. Instead, the mayonnaise/salad dressing must be packaged or placed in a small container for the students to add to the salad themselves.



Rationale

While the diet must contain some fats because it is an essential nutrient, it must not be in excess. Preparing foods by baking, boiling, broiling and grilling without added fat lowers the total fat intake. It is especially important to avoid saturated fats and Trans fats in food preparation as they can increase the risk of heart disease. Saturated fats are found in butter and some vegetable oils. Trans fats are found in margarine, shortening, commercially baked goods (doughnuts, twists, cookies, chips etc) frozen french fries and many other processed foods. Monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats are preferable and can be found in oils such as olive, peanut, canola and sunflower oil.

Sweets, Sugars & Salt

Dietary Guidelines number four states, "*As often as possible, choose food with less sugar and less salt.*"

Requirements:

- Cake (no frosting, icing or sticky, sugary fillings) can be served.
- Cookies (no icings, frosting or chocolate chips).
- Pastries (no icing, frosting, or sticky, sugary filling).
- Fruit based or low-fat desserts are permitted twice per week.
- Absolutely no candy, chewing gum, toffee, chocolate, sodas, potato chips, cheese curls, and cheese doodles.

Rationale

Candy is usually high in sugar, fat and calories and consists of mostly empty calories and is considered to be **Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)**. They are a major contributor of dental cavities in children. Prohibiting candy and other similar types of foods will prevent children from selecting it over a more nutritious snack.



Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value

Foods on the restricted list are Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV). Such foods are either high fat, high salt or high sugar and would not meet nutritional standards for children to grow and develop properly.

The following items are prohibited from being sold on the school campus at all times.

Candy: All types.

Cheese Doodles or curls: All cheese doodles and cheese curls.

Chewing gum: Any flavored products from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing. All types are restricted.

Chips: All chips.

Chocolate bars: Chocolate bars including those with fruit and nuts **and** cereal bars covered with chocolate.

"Cups"/"baggies": Kool aid based beverages that have been put into sanitary cups and plastic bags and allowed to freeze.

Fruit flavored drinks: Include flavored water, sweetened drinks, beverages and punch, frozen "icles" not made from 100% juices.

Sodas: Any carbonated beverage. No product shall be excluded from this definition because it contains discrete nutrients added to the food such as vitamins, minerals, protein and fruit flavor.

***Note**

Restricted foods for sale for lunch vendors:

- 100% fruit juices
- Any other beverages



Part II

Food Safety



Don't
cross-contaminate



Food Safety

Food Poisoning

Eating foods that are contaminated by bacteria, other harmful organisms and foreign particles can cause food poisoning. Symptoms of food poisoning may include one or more of the following:

- Vomiting
- Feeling weak
- Stomach pains
- Fever or chills
- Diarrhoea



Food poisoning is caused by germs that have multiplied on the food as a result of improper food handling.

Food can become contaminated through:

- People working with food.
- Dirty equipment and counter tops.
- Other food that is already contaminated.
- Animals and insects near, on or in food.

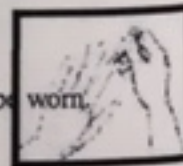
In serious cases, especially with small children, people who are ill and the elderly, **food poisoning can lead to death**. This is why it is **very important** to handle food properly. Below are some ways to stop the spread of germs and bacteria in food preparation and serving areas.

Here are some ways to prevent food poisoning:

- If you have a cut on your hand, cover the cut with a waterproof dressing before touching food.
- If you are sick you should get medical advice before working, as some diseases can be spread to other people.
- Keep hair tied back or covered so that it does not fall in the food.



Fingernails must be clean and clipped short at all times. fingernail polish should not be worn.

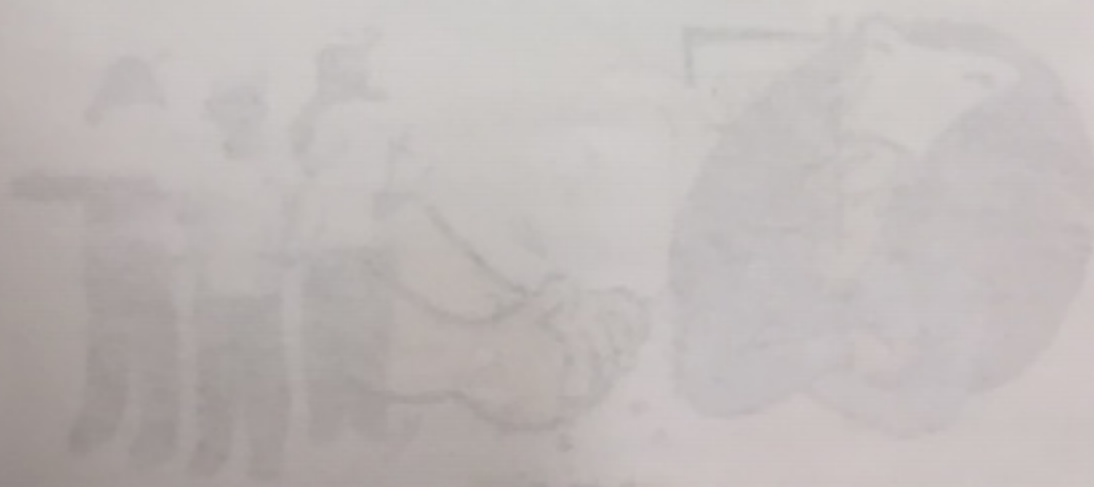


- Person collecting money **must not** serve food.

Part III

Personal Hygiene

Principal
MAY PRIMARY
EPHONB 12423 13 4



Personal Hygiene

Washing and dry hands must be observed during the entire process of food preparation and service.

HANDWASHING

Always wash your hands:

- Before touching food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose or sneezing into your hand
- After touching your hair
- After touching animals
- After handling money



Dress Code

Rationale

School lunch vendors and their assistants are an integral part of the learning environment and should set good examples for students and be an attractive part of the school environment.

School Vendors and their assistants must:

- ◆ Be neat in their appearance and dressed in a clean freshly laundered uniform.
- ◆ Wear hair nets at all times when preparing and serving foods.
- ◆ Not wear sleeveless blouses or shirts.
- ◆ Wear closed-in shoes.



Principal Resource Persons

Ministry of Health:

Executive Management

Ms. Camille Johnson —Permanent Secretary
Dr. Merceline Dahl-Regis— Chief Medical Officer

Nutrition Unit

Ms. Adelma Roach — Director of Food and Nutrition Unit
Ms. Camelta Barnes—Sr. Public Health Nutritionist
Miss Shandera Smith—Dietician

Ministry of Education:

Executive Management

Mrs. Elma Garraway—Permanent Secretary
Mr. Ralph Bowe—First Assistant Secretary

Department of Education:

Mrs. Glenda Rolle — Education Officer, Family Life & Health Education
Mrs. Sharon Ferguson — Education Officer, Family & Consumer Science Education
Ms. Benita Adderley – Department of Education
Mr. Charles Wildgoose — Sr. Master
Mr. Wenly Fowler — Principal, President of Primary School Principal Association
Mr. Howard Newbold — District Superintendent, Northwestern District
Mr. Willard Barr— District Superintendent, Southeastern District

School Vendors Association

Mrs. Yvonne Cooper—President

The Dietary Guidelines for The Bahamas



1. Use our drum to help you choose a variety of foods daily.
2. As often as possible, limit the amount of high fat and greasy foods you eat.
3. Make starchy vegetables, peas and beans part of your diet.
4. As often as possible, choose food with less sugar and less salt.
5. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables everyday.
6. Drink plenty of water.
7. It is advisable not to drink alcohol.
8. Make physical activity & exercise a part of your lifestyle.
9. Choose foods for their nutritional value, not for the name brand or cost.
10. Breast milk is the best choice for infants to start a healthy life.

*Prepared by The Nutrition Unit,
Department of Public Health,
Ministry of Health.
2008.*