

# Developing a Nutrition Policy

Developing a school nutrition policy is a great way to engage your whole school community and set realistic guidelines for food and nutrition at school. Consulting with your staff and parents/whānau will help to identify your school's needs, as well as other aspects of the school that could support healthy eating. Implementing a nutrition policy provides guidance and can make healthy choices easier for all. It's important to consider the school environment, school food provision, the school curriculum and promotion of healthy choices to students and wider school community.

The Ministry of Education supports healthy eating and healthy activity with its National Administration Guidelines:

## NAG 1

Each Board of Trustees is required to:

- (v) in consultation with the school's Māori community, develop and make known to the school's community policy, plans and targets for improving the achievement of Māori students.

## NAG 5

Each Board of Trustees is required to:

- (ii) promote healthy food and nutrition for all students.
- The policy describes how a board will do this.

## WHAT COULD A HEALTHY NUTRITION POLICY CONSIST OF?

### Rationale/ Vision

A statement which provides background information and explains the importance of having a policy on food and nutrition, and its impact on health.

### Goals/ Aims

The broad, long-term purposes of your policy.

### Strategies/ Actions

How the school addresses specific areas related to food and nutrition is covered.

Review Date & Signatures

# Possible Action Steps

## Assemble a core action group

Gather a variety of people who may wish to participate in a core action group, including board members, health professionals, principal, teachers, students, parents, whānau, local Iwi and caterers.

## Initial needs assessment

To identify your needs, consult with staff and families/whānau or caregivers

Things you may want to discuss are:

- the benefits of healthy eating
- the National Administration Guidelines for schools
- the perceived priorities within your school
- current food and nutrition units of learning and key learning outcomes
- food provision at school through school food service/lunch order/events/fundraising/classroom rewards/class parties/camps
- students coming to school without adequate breakfast or lunch
- active role modelling from teaching and non-teaching staff
- food breaks at school
- food safety procedures at school
- how to involve children, young people, and the community in making changes.

## Decide on

- the needs and priorities relating to food and nutrition in your school
- the aims and intended outcomes of your school's policy, based on these priorities, goals or indicators of success
- how to engage parental support and inform and consult leaders in the local community.

## Develop a draft policy

Following the assessment, the core action group can then start developing a Nutrition Policy. See the Heart Foundation's sample policies.

## Consult

Members of the school community about the proposed policy and seek feedback to modify the policy.

## Adopt policy and communicate it to the school community

The final policy is signed-off by the Board of Trustees and Principal, with review dates set. This policy is then distributed to the wider school community. It could be included in the students' enrolment packs, on websites, or in newsletters, both to inform parents about the policy and to provide ideas for healthy foods that could be provided for lunches and snacks.

## Implement policy

### Review policy

A policy review is required every two years. Information for the review is gathered through ongoing monitoring.

### Questions to consider are:

- Has the intent of the policy been achieved?
- Is the policy being adhered to?
- Is the policy being regularly communicated to the wider community?
- What has changed and needs to be redressed, eg. a new canteen operator contract?
- Is the policy effectively changing habits, improving the school environment and the health of the whole school community?

# Sample Nutrition Policy

## Vision

The board supports and encourages a healthy eating environment and culture in our school.

## Goals

- To educate children and young people on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for health and education.
- To provide an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity.
- To work with our whole school community to identify and address priorities.
- To establish a student health team to represent student voice and provide leadership.
- To help young people develop the skills they need to make responsible decisions about healthy eating.
- To help young people understand the factors that influence their food and beverage choices and the possible long-term effects of their choices on their learning, development and well-being.
- To ensure that only food and beverages that enhance young people's health are sold or served at school and are consistent with Fuelled4life (Ministry of Health's Food and Beverage Classification System).
- To provide foods and beverages that are value for money and prepared in an environment that adheres to food safety guidelines.
- To ensure no children go hungry at school so all students have equal 'opportunity to learn'.
- To be aware of the range of cultures represented in the school and allow for traditional food preferences.
- To encourage staff to be active role models for healthy eating and physical activity.
- To ensure staff receive professional development in the areas of food, nutrition and physical activity.

## Strategies/Actions

### In the Context of the Curriculum

Food and nutrition education is an integral part of a comprehensive health education programme. Teaching and learning about food and nutrition is

based on Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum, Hauora i roto i te Marautanga o Aotearoa, Fuelled4life and the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for the relevant age group.

- Consult with the whole school community biennially to ensure they are actively involved in identifying and addressing their nutrition-related healthy and addressing healthy eating and physical activity priorities.
- The student health team works with the school food service to develop and promote an affordable menu that meets the recommendations from the Ministry of Health's Food and Nutrition Guidelines and Fuelled4life.
- Children who attend school without adequate breakfast or lunch will be provided with a healthy meal. If this pattern persists the child's family will be contacted.
- Adults will be encouraged to model healthy food and beverage choices.
- Everyday foods and beverages are promoted regularly through the school newsletter, nutrition lessons, posters and school events.
- All school camps, festivals, sports days, fundraising initiatives, classroom rewards and celebrations will encourage young people to enjoy sharing and eating healthy food and beverages.
- Water will be the preferred beverage.
- Young people will be encouraged to wash their hands before eating and also to eat sitting down.
- All school food service staff will have current food safety training and adhere to food safety guidelines.
- Lunchbox guidelines and this nutrition policy are provided to parents/whanau on enrolment
- We will participate only in food-related events and initiatives that support healthy eating practices.

Policy review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nutrition Policy Sample A

## Rationale

To create a school environment that promotes healthy eating – to enhance health, educational outcomes and empower students to make nutritious and enjoyable food choices for a lifetime.

## Goals

- To give students the skills and knowledge to develop healthy eating habits.
- To ensure nutrition messages are consistent across the entire school.
- To create an environment where water and plain milk are the only drinks available to students while at school.
- To promote healthy eating and physical activity to students and their whanau.

## Strategies

- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health through classroom nutrition education sessions.
- All staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviours.
- Nutrition-related professional development for teachers is encouraged annually.
- Food and drinks provided by the school canteen (and vending machines) will fit within the healthy 'everyday' and 'sometimes' categories of the Ministry of Health's Food and Beverage Classification System.
- Students will not be permitted to leave school grounds during the school day to purchase food or beverages.
- Plain water and milk are the only beverages for sale and consumption at school.
- Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day, including in class.
- Food and drinks provided at school events (including class rewards, parties, camps, sports days, staff meetings, fundraising) will be consistent with this policy.
- School sports teams will be encouraged to use water as the only source of hydration, and healthy snacks to refuel.
- Any sponsorship provided by companies will align with this policy.
- Nutrition information is available for parents/whanau on the school website, through healthy snippets in the school newsletter or through posters displayed at school.
- Physical activity is recognised as a vital partner to good nutrition practices and will be actively promoted within the school community.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nutrition Policy Sample B

## Rationale

To prioritise student health and wellbeing by promoting healthy eating practices at school, and providing support to families/whānau to make healthy food choices.

## Goals

- Provision of food that is consistent with the National Food and Nutrition Guidelines, taking into account the range of cultures represented in the school and allowing for traditional food preferences.
- To ensure nutrition messages are consistent across the entire school.
- To teach students to take responsibility for their own health through nutrition education.
- To educate parents about healthy lunchbox ideas and the importance of healthy eating.

## Strategies

- To provide a food service that offers food choices that are consistent with the New Zealand Food and Nutrition Guidelines and the Food and Beverage Classification System 'everyday' and 'sometimes' healthy choices.
- To provide healthy food that is affordable for students.
- All food is to be prepared and sold in a clean, smoke-free environment.
- Plain water and milk are the only beverages available to students at school.
- Students are not to leave the school grounds during the school day to purchase food or beverages.
- Food and drinks available for class rewards, school fundraising, at school camps, festivals and sports days are consistent with this policy.
- School sports teams are encouraged to drink plain water for hydration and eat healthy snacks to refuel.
- Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health through knowledge gained from classroom nutrition sessions.
- The enrolment pack will include information on the school nutrition policy and some healthy ideas for school lunches.
- Nutrition information is available for parents/whanau on the school website, through healthy snippets in the school newsletter and/or posters displayed at school.
- There is a process in place to provide for students who come to school without breakfast and/or lunch.
- All staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating behaviours.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_