

# Healthy Food and Drink Guidance - Schools

2019 Draft for consultation

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# Contents

<b>Healthy eating is important</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Scope</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Principles</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Developing a school policy</b>	<b>5</b>
Food and drink groups	5
Nutrient criteria tables	7
Vegetables and fruit	7
Breads, cereals and grains	7
Milk and milk products	8
Legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs, poultry (eg, chicken) and red meat	8
Mixed meals/ready-to-eat and ready-to-heat meals	10
Fats and oils, spreads, sauces, dressings and condiments	11
Packaged snack foods	12
Baked items	12
Drinks	13
Notes on Health Star Ratings	14
Source material	14



# Healthy eating is important

Good nutrition is essential for the healthy growth and development of children and adolescents. Children eat much of their food each weekday at school. Good nutrition affects children's behaviour, learning, concentration and energy, as well as their physical health. When children eat a nutritious diet, they find it easier to learn.

# Purpose

This Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for schools helps schools develop a policy to promote and provide healthy food and drink. It shows your commitment to improving the wellbeing of children, staff and the school community.

The Guidance supports school boards to invest in people's wellbeing. Having a school policy sends a consistent message that the whole school practises nutrition education that is part of the curriculum. It is about creating supportive environments for children where healthy choices are easy.

This Guidance enables children to:

- access healthy food and drinks in school
- develop healthy food and drink preferences
- learn to make positive and informed choices about food and drinks
- develop critical perspectives about food and nutrition.

# Scope

The Guidance applies to:

- all food and drink provided by, or able to be purchased within, a primary school, kura, secondary school or wharekura
- free/charitable food provided to schools, kura and wharekura
- any food or catering provided by an external party within the school environment.

The Guidance excludes:

- food and drink brought to school by children and staff to eat
- gifts of food or drink to children or staff (not funded by the school)
- self-catered student and staff shared meals, and food for special occasions or celebrations.

# Principles

The principles of this Guidance are as follows.

1. Offer a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups:
  - plenty of vegetables and fruit
  - grain foods, mostly wholegrain and naturally high in fibre
  - some milk and milk products, mostly low and reduced fat
  - some legumes, nuts, seeds, fish/other seafood, eggs, poultry (eg, chicken) and/or red meat with fat removed.
2. Food should be prepared with or contain minimal saturated fat, salt (sodium) and added sugar, and should be mostly whole or less commercially processed.

This means:

- foods containing moderate amounts of saturated fat, salt and/or added sugar may be available in small portions (eg, some baked goods)
- no deep-fried foods
- no confectionery (eg, sweets and chocolate).

3. Offer only water and unflavoured milk as cold drink options.

This means:

- no sugar-sweetened drinks
  - no drinks containing 'intense' (artificial) sweeteners
  - no fruit or vegetable juices (including 100 percent juice, no-added-sugar varieties).
4. Consider people's cultural preferences, religious beliefs and special dietary requirements, including gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan options. Where school meals are provided or sold, healthy food and drink choices appropriate for a wide range of children should be available.



# Developing a school policy

Toolkits will be available to support schools to use the information in this Guidance to adopt and implement their own 'Healthy Food and Drink Policy'. These are currently being developed and will be accessible via digital and hardcopies.

When developing a policy for your school, you should consider:

- the needs of different cultures and religious groups and people with special dietary needs
- discouraging association with products and brands that belong in the red group
- encouraging sustainable, seasonal and locally grown and manufactured food and drinks, where possible.

## Food and drink groups

The purpose of the colour-coded food and drink classification is to provide a practical guide for food service providers within schools (eg, canteen operators) to identify foods as 'healthy' and 'less healthy'. It should not be used to convey messages about the healthiness of items at a consumer level. For example, it is not intended to be used to educate children and whanau about food.

The toolkit will provide more examples of food and drinks in each category. If a Health Star Rating (HSR) for a particular food or drink is unavailable, refer to the toolkit resource 'Healthy Food and Drinks reference document' for supporting information on various categories (currently in development).

Food groups are defined as follows.

Green group items	Amber group items	Red group items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a good source of nutrition</li> <li>• the basis of a healthy diet</li> <li>• low in saturated fat, added sugar and added salt</li> <li>• mostly whole and less processed</li> <li>• come from the four food groups: vegetables and fruit, grain foods (mostly wholegrain and those naturally high in fibre), some milk and milk products (mostly low and reduced fat), some legumes, seafood, eggs and lean meat (and meat alternatives)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not part of an everyday diet</li> <li>• may have some nutritional value</li> <li>• often more processed</li> <li>• have moderate levels of saturated fat and/or added sugars or salt.</li> <li>• in large serving sizes, can contribute to excess kilojoule/calorie consumption.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have poor nutritional value</li> <li>• high in saturated fat and/or added sugars and salt</li> <li>• can contribute to excess kilojoule/calorie consumption.</li> <li>• are often highly processed foods and drinks.</li> </ul>

Healthy food and drinks should be the easy choice. Green group food and drink items should predominate. Healthy options should make up at least 75 percent of the food and drinks available.

Schools should manage the availability of green group, amber group and red group items as follows.

Green group items	Amber group items	Red group items
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dominate the food and drinks available</li> <li>• are displayed prominently on shelves, benches, cabinets and vending machines.</li> <li>• are always available in sufficient quantities to be the main option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are 'selected carefully' by canteen operators and managers, and do not dominate canteen menus</li> <li>• may be available in limited amounts and portion sizes (according to the nutrient criteria table)</li> <li>• are not prominently displayed at the expense of green group items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are not be available or are phased out over time in accordance with each school's implementation plan.</li> </ul>

# Nutrient criteria tables

The following tables provide a guide to help school food providers classify specific foods as green, amber or red.

## Vegetables and fruit

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Vegetables	Fresh, frozen, canned and dried plain vegetables, including fresh potatoes, kūmara and taro	Vegetable products (eg, hash browns) with an HSR* of $\geq 3.5$  * See the notes below	Vegetable products with an HSR of $< 3.5$
Fruit	Fresh, frozen and canned fruit	Fruit products with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$  $\leq 30g$ dried fruit as an ingredient or part of a fruit and nut mix	Fruit products with an HSR of $< 3.5$  $> 30g$ dried fruit as an ingredient or part of a fruit and nut mix, or dried fruit on its own

## Breads, cereals and grains

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Breads and crackers	All wholegrain, multigrain, wheatmeal and wholemeal bread with $\geq 5g$ fibre/100g and $< 450mg$ sodium/100g  All wholegrain, multigrain, wheatmeal and wholemeal crispbreads and crackers with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Other bread products with $< 5g$ fibre and/or $> 450mg$ sodium/100g  All other crispbreads and crackers with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	All other crispbreads and crackers with an HSR of $< 3.5$
Breakfast cereal	Wholegrain breakfast cereal with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$ and $\leq 15g$ sugar/100g	Other breakfast cereal with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Breakfast cereals that do not meet the green or amber criteria
Other grains	Wholegrain/brown/high-fibre rice, wholemeal pasta, couscous, quinoa, buckwheat, rye	Refined grains and white rice, plain pasta and unflavoured noodles and couscous with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Flavoured packets with an HSR of $< 3.5$

## Milk and milk products

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Milk and milk products	<p>Reduced or low-fat products with an HSR of <math>\geq 3.5</math>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• milk and added-calcium plant-based milks (eg, rice, almond, oat, soy)</li> <li>• yoghurt/dairy food (<math>\leq 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• custard (<math>\leq 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• cheese (<math>\leq 40\text{g}</math> portion)</li> </ul>	<p>Full-fat products with an HSR of <math>\geq 3.5</math>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• milk and added-calcium plant-based milks (eg, rice, almond, oat, soy)</li> <li>• yoghurt/dairy food (<math>\leq 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• custard (<math>\leq 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• cheese (<math>\leq 40\text{g}</math> portion)</li> </ul> <p>Reduced or low-fat cream, sour cream and cream cheese</p> <p>Lite<sup>1</sup> coconut milk or coconut cream, or coconut cream diluted with water</p> <p>Frozen desserts (eg, yoghurt, ice cream) with an HSR of <math>\geq 3.5</math> (<math>\leq 100\text{g}</math> portion)</p>	<p>Full-fat products with an HSR of <math>&lt; 3.5</math>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yoghurt/dairy food (<math>&gt; 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• custard (<math>&gt; 150\text{ml}</math> portion)</li> <li>• cheese (<math>&gt; 40\text{g}</math> portion)</li> </ul> <p>Standard cream, sour cream and cream cheese</p> <p>Frozen desserts with an HSR of <math>&lt; 3.5</math> or <math>&gt; 100\text{g}</math> portion</p> <p>All sweetened cold milk drinks</p> <p>Standard coconut milk and coconut cream</p>

## Legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs, poultry (eg, chicken) and red meat

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Legumes	<p>Fresh, dried and canned beans and peas eg, baked beans, red kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, split peas and tofu (preferably with reduced salt/sodium).</p>		

<sup>1</sup> 'Lite' refers to reduced fat/salt/energy/sugar version of the standard variety.

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Nuts <sup>2</sup> and seeds	Unsalted nuts and seeds with no added sugar	Salted nuts and seeds ( $\leq 30g$ portion, with no added sugar)  All nuts and seeds with dried fruit $\leq 30g$	Salted nuts and seeds ( $> 30g$ portion)  Sugared or candy-coated nuts and seeds  Nuts and seeds with confectionery <sup>3</sup>
Fish and other seafood,	Fresh or frozen fish or seafood  Canned and packaged fish with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Canned or packaged fish with an HSR of $< 3.5$ :  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><math>\leq 50g</math> in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads</li> <li><math>\leq 120g</math> as a main meal</li> </ul>	Processed fish, and portions that do not meet the amber serving size
Eggs	Eggs		
Poultry (chicken)	Skinless, lean poultry  Processed and packaged chicken (eg, coated skinless chicken/turkey) with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Poultry with small amounts of visible fat and skin remaining  Processed chicken with an HSR of $< 3.5$ :  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><math>\leq 50g</math> in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads</li> <li><math>\leq 120g</math> as a main meal</li> </ul>	Processed and packaged poultry that do not meet the amber criteria  Sausages served either as part of a meal or as an individual item
Red meat	Lean meat  Premium or prime mince <sup>4</sup>  Processed and packaged meat with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$	Meat with small amounts of visible fat only  Standard mince <sup>5</sup> , cooked and with the fat drained off	Meat where fat is clearly visible  Standard mince without the fat drained off  Processed meat that does not meet the amber criteria  Sausages served either as part of a meal or as an individual item

2 Note that exposure to peanuts/gluten can have severe consequences for children and young people who are allergic to those products. Your school should consider limiting exposure to these items if you have students with allergies.

3 'Confectionery' includes boiled sweets, toffees and caramels, fudge, fondants, gums (including sugar-free gums), pastilles and jellies, chocolate, fruit leathers, yoghurt-covered items, candied fruit/nuts and compound chocolate.

4 'Premium or prime mince' means mince with  $\geq 95$  percent visual lean meats or  $\geq 90$  percent chemical lean.

5 'Standard mince' means mince with  $\geq 90$  percent visual lean meats or  $\geq 85$  percent chemical lean.

Category	Green	Amber	Red
		Processed and packaged meat <sup>6</sup> with an HSR of <3.5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≤ 50g in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads</li> <li>• ≤ 120g as a main meal</li> <li>• dried meat products (eg, jerky, biltong with an HSR of ≥ 3.5 and ≤ 800kJ per packet)</li> </ul>	

## Mixed meals/ready-to-eat and ready-to-heat meals

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Mixed meals and ready-to-eat meals (two or more items or ingredients from different food groups) (eg, pizza, soup, lasagne, macaroni cheese)	Meals that contain at least 75 percent green items, <sup>7</sup> and minimal amounts of amber items or ingredients (no more than 25%), as determined visually or by an assessment of the ingredient list  Packaged meals with an HSR of ≥ 3.5 that meet the above criteria	Meals that contain vegetables and/or fruit and are prepared with green and amber items only  Packaged meals with an HSR of ≥ 3.5 that meet the above criteria	Meals that contain no vegetables, fruit or green items or ingredients, and/or has an HSR of < 3.5
Sandwiches	Sandwiches prepared with green items only, including the bread	Sandwiches prepared with green and amber items only, including the bread	Sandwiches prepared with red items
Sushi	Sushi prepared with green items only <sup>3</sup>	Other sushi, excludes sushi containing deep-fried ingredients.	Containing deep-fried ingredients.

6 Examples of processed meats include: fresh sausages, smoked chicken, smoked fish, luncheon, bologna, cooked sausages, salami, pepperoni, ham, corned beef, pastrami, cooked uncured meat products (eg, roast beef), bacon, dry-cured meat products (eg, prosciutto) and meat patties.

7 Foods not classified as amber or red can also be included (eg, cornflour or baking powder).

## Fats and oils, spreads, sauces, dressings and condiments

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Fats and oils and spreads <sup>8</sup>	<p>Low-salt mono- or poly-unsaturated fat spreads eg, margarine, nut butter<sup>9</sup></p> <p>Vegetable oils eg, canola, olive, rice bran, sunflower, soya bean, flaxseed, peanut or sesame</p>	<p>Standard spreads eg, nut butter</p> <p>A single serve of butter (<math>\leq 10g</math>)</p>	<p>Saturated fats and oils eg, lard, palm oil and coconut oil</p> <p>A single serve of butter (<math>&gt; 10g</math>)</p>
Sauces and dressings	<p>Reduced fat/sugar/salt salad dressings, mayonnaise, tomato sauce<sup>10</sup></p> <p>Use in small amounts or serve on the side.</p>	<p>Standard salad dressings, mayonnaise, tomato sauce</p> <p>Use in small amounts or serve on the side.</p>	
Savoury condiments	<p>Reduced fat/sugar/salt sauces (chilli, soy, fish, etc), pastes (tomato), relishes, stocks, yeast and vegetable extracts (Marmite, Vegemite) or, if using standard items, don't add salt</p> <p>Mustard, herbs and spices</p> <p>A small amount of iodised salt</p>		
Sweet condiments	<p>Reduced-sugar jam, honey or commercially made compote</p>	<p>Standard jam, honey or commercially made compote (<math>&lt; 1</math> Tbsp portion)</p>	
Deep-fried foods			All deep-fried foods <sup>11</sup>

8 Refer to the 'Milk and milk products' section for cream, sour cream and cream cheese.

9 Make margarine the default option for single-serve spreads.

10 Use sauces and dressings in small amounts or serve on the side.

11 Where applicable, in place of deep-frying, use healthier cooking methods (eg, braise, bake, steam, grill, pan-fry or poach).

## Packaged snack foods

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Packaged snack foods <sup>12</sup>		Packaged snack foods with an HSR of $\geq 3.5$ and $\leq 800$ kJ per packet	Packaged snack foods with an HSR of $< 3.5$ or $> 800$ kJ per packet
Confectionery <sup>3</sup>			All confectionery

## Baked items

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Baked items		<p>More than half of the selection of baked products offered (packaged or unpackaged) must contain some wholemeal flour, wholegrains (eg, oats, bran, seeds) and/or fruit or vegetables (eg, fresh, frozen or dried)</p> <p>Items with less saturated fat, salt and sugar</p> <p>No confectionery<sup>3</sup> within products.</p> <p>Muesli bars with an HSR of <math>\geq 3.5</math></p> <p>No icing.</p> <p><b>Portion sizes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scones, cake or dessert (<math>\leq 100</math>g portion)</li> <li>• Loaf, muffins (<math>\leq 100</math>g portion)</li> <li>• Slices (<math>\leq 80</math>g portion)</li> </ul>	<p>Products that do not meet the amber criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sausage rolls</li> <li>• Energy bars and protein bars</li> <li>• Sweet bakery items that contain confectionery</li> <li>• Sweet bakery items with icing</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> 'Packaged snack foods' here refers to packaged foods not covered by other categories (eg, bakery items). All packaged food and drink sold on site, including multi-serve packaged foods, should have an HSR of  $\geq 3.5$  and any other criteria that apply per packet may be sold (eg, crackers, cereal, biscuits, canned or packaged soups, plain popcorn).



Category	Green	Amber	Red
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biscuits, pikelets (<math>\leq</math> 40g portion)</li> <li>• Small pastries (<math>\leq</math> 60g portion)</li> <li>• Pies and quiches (<math>\leq</math> 140g portion)</li> </ul>	

## Drinks

Category	Green	Amber	Red
Drinks	<p>Plain, unflavoured water</p> <p>Reduced- or low-fat milk</p> <p>Unsweetened reduced- or low-fat plant-based milks (eg, rice, almond, oat, soy) with added calcium</p>	Plain full-fat milk and plant-based milks (eg, rice, almond, oat, soy) with added calcium	<p>Sugar-sweetened drinks<sup>13</sup></p> <p>Artificially sweetened drinks</p> <p>Milk-based drinks with added sugar (eg, milkshakes)</p> <p>100 percent fruit and/or vegetable juices, including those diluted with no added sugar, and unflavoured coconut water</p> <p>Energy drinks and sports drinks</p> <p>Flavoured waters</p>
Smoothies (all varieties, including dairy and non-dairy)		No-added-sugar, reduced- or full-fat milk or yoghurt-based smoothies made with fresh/frozen fruit, or canned fruit with no added sugar with an HSR of $\geq$ 3.5 and $\leq$ 150ml portion	<p>Smoothies prepared with concentrate, fruit juice or added sugar and/or not milk-based</p> <p>All smoothies that do not meet the amber criteria</p>

<sup>13</sup> 'Sugar-sweetened drinks' refers to any drink that contains added caloric sweetener, usually sugar. This includes soft drinks/fizzy drinks, sachet mixes, fruit drinks, cordials, flavoured milk, flavoured water, cold tea/coffee and energy/sports drinks.

## Notes on Health Star Ratings

The Health Star Rating system<sup>14</sup> is a front-of-pack labelling system that rates the nutritional profile of packaged foods. It helps compare the nutrition of products that you typically see shelved side by side in a grocery shop. The system assigns a rating from one-half a star to five stars. The more stars a product has, the healthier it is. The star rating provides a comparison within similar product categories only. For example, the system helps choose between one breakfast cereal and another, not between yoghurt and pasta sauce.

This Guidance uses an HSR of 3.5 as an indication of 'healthiness' for various packaged items. Please note that the recommended availability (green/amber/red) of packaged items varies across categories.

## Source material

Commonwealth of Australia. 2019. Health Star Rating System. URL: [www.healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/How-to-use-health-stars](http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/How-to-use-health-stars) (accessed 30 September 2019).

Ministry of Health. 2012. *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Children and Young People (Aged 2–18 years): A background paper. Partial revision February 2015.* Wellington: Ministry of Health. URL: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/food-nutrition-guidelines-healthy-children-young-people-background-paper-feb15-v2.pdf> (accessed 30 September 2019).

The guidance for early learning services will include introducing solid foods, choking hazards, milk and fibre. Based on: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/food-and-nutrition-guidelines-healthy-infants-and-toddlers-aged-0-2-background-paper-partially> (accessed 30 September 2019).

<sup>14</sup> For more information, see [www.healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/How-to-use-health-stars](http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/How-to-use-health-stars)