



### Interpreting the WA school food policy

We know from discussions with our members, Star Choice™ companies and other stakeholders that there is some confusion and concerns over the policy changes.

#### Foodcore's role

Foodcore's role in advocating for effective policy as well as what is in the best interest of our members has included consultation with members, partnership engagement, communication and meetings with the Department of Education (DOE); correspondence with food industry; responding to requests from media; [publishing frequently asked questions](#) (see the news section of the Foodcore website), social media and newsletters.

We continue to endeavour to better understand the Department of Health nutrient criteria; and communication plan and will support schools based on DOE advice.

#### Information and advice from the Department of Education (DOE)

- The [Department of Education's Student Health in Public Schools Procedures, and Appendix B: Healthy Food and Drink](#), has been updated; it is underpinned by the [Department of Health School Food and Drink criteria](#)#
- DOE confirmed no items currently sold in school canteens have been banned under recent changes\*
- Canteens can operate as usual and take the time they need to consult with Principals and their communities, and make any adaptations to their canteen menu that also take into account operation needs like workload and financial considerations
  - o **This means, if a school is satisfied and comfortable with their current menu, they can still continue to offer this and use the Star Choice™ Buyers Guide as a menu planning tool**
- The new Health recommendations advise that while healthier foods are available, school canteens can include ham sandwiches in their amber food count and continue to serve them, as long as 60% of foods on the menu are in the green category
- The Principal must confirm canteens or food services promote a wide range of healthy food and drinks. Menus should comprise 'green', 'amber' and 'red' food and drink as follows:
  - o 'green' items – account for a minimum of 60% of the menu
  - o 'amber' items – account for a maximum of 40% of the menu, with savoury commercial products that are 'amber' items offered on a maximum of two days per week
  - o 'red' items are not on the menu.
- 'Amber' count can include selected 'red' items as described below:
  - o Only where an 'amber' item has been reclassified as a 'red' item it may be included on the menu and included in the 'amber' count. These items may only be offered on the same two days a week as 'amber' savoury commercial products
  - o This cannot be applied retrospectively. Once a 'red' item has been removed from a menu, it cannot be re-introduced.

# For menu advice based on the new Department of Health School Food and Drink criteria contact freshSNAP

\* If an item was categorised as red before (e.g. confectionery, salami, sugary drinks, iced cakes) they remain red and off the menu.

#### Public schools - DOE contacts



## Nutrition Services

Formerly WA School Canteen Association Inc.

Foodcore Nutrition Services Incorporated

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Public schools, are encouraged to direct their policy related questions or concerns to the Student Engagement and Wellbeing branch at [StudentEngagementandWellbeing.Admin@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:StudentEngagementandWellbeing.Admin@education.wa.edu.au), call (08) 9402 6432 or your Principal can lodge a Request for Assistance (RAF) via IKON.

### **Non-government schools**

The Department of Education policy has been implemented for public schools.

According to the Catholic Education Office WA, their suite of policies (including healthy food and drink) are under review. The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia don't have any position/policy as schools decide their own stance on matters like these.

Our advice to non-government schools is to take a similar approach presented by the Department of Education - business as usual for now, no changes are required immediately, and they should consider any menu changes in consultation with their school community.

### **The Star Choice™ Registration Program is continuing**

We know this continues to be a valuable tool for school canteens, we will be publishing the July 2024 Buyer's Guide as per usual. The Buyer's Guide is used by public, independent and Catholic schools as well as range of community venues.

The Department of Education confirmed, it would be disruptive to schools if Foodcore did not continue to provide this service.

If you have any questions or would just like to chat, please contact us.