

Safe and Pleasant Eating Areas at School



All people, including students, like to eat in a nice place! Clean, welcoming spaces with adequate seating encourage students to socialize with friends while enjoying healthy foods and beverages. They can reduce noise and garbage, contributing to better student behaviour. They may even help students to finish their lunch during the time provided.

Apply the School Food and Beverage Policy (P/PM 150) to safe and pleasant eating areas

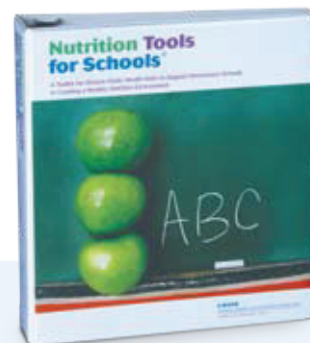
The Ministry of Education's School Food and Beverage Policy (P/PM 150) mandates that all food and beverages sold in schools be prepared, served and stored safely. The Policy also states that schools should establish a healthy environment. Offering a safe and pleasant eating area for students will help schools achieve this.

Safe and pleasant eating areas include:

- Clean, calm and enjoyable space
- Rules for safe behaviour
- Adequate and comfortable seating
- Controlled noise levels
- Adult or senior supervision while students eat

If your budget does not allow you to buy equipment or change the physical structure, you can still create an enjoyable atmosphere. Ask school council members and other parents for ideas and contributions.

Nutrition Tools for Schools



Nutrition Tools for Schools® is a program consisting of a Toolkit and public health support to help your school create a healthy nutrition environment.

Safe Food Handling

It is important to encourage safe food handling training for volunteers, lunch monitors and paid staff who help with food programs (eg, student nutrition programs, catered lunches and milk programs).



Action ideas for school lunchrooms and eating areas

- Work with lunch monitors to develop a code of conduct for acceptable lunch time behaviour (eg, no bullying). Display the code of conduct on a poster, scroll, or contract in the eating area. Remind lunch monitors to review it with students at the start of each school term. Inform parents about the code of conduct in the school newsletter
- Set a fixed lunch routine (eg, which grades eat first, seating areas by grade) so students get used to an orderly lunch routine
- Invite public health staff to deliver a healthy eating in-service to lunch monitors. Encourage monitors to be positive role models and promote healthy food choices and food safety with students
- Promote recycling with well marked bins. Highlight recycling tips and list the types of packages/containers that can be recycled on a bulletin board or poster
- Assign lunch monitors to help with opening containers/packages, garbage disposal and clean-up. To speed up clean-up, collect empty lunch bags in large, class-specific bins. Bins can be wheeled back to each classroom by student helpers during recess. Students can collect their lunch bags as they enter the classroom
- Do you have a designated lunchroom? You can make it fun!
 - Display student artwork on walls/bulletin boards
 - Reserve an area for healthy eating information
 - Play light music to help to control excess noise
 - Decorate the lunchroom for special occasions
 - Entertain students with inspirational messages, riddles or jokes
 - Acknowledge birthdays on a weekly basis
 - Celebrate multiculturalism

Together we can make the healthy choice the easy choice!

For more information about Nutrition Tools for Schools®, P/PM 150, or healthy eating, please contact your local public health unit:

York Region Community and Health Services
Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653
or visit
www.york.ca/nutrition

For information on healthy schools go to the Ministry of Education Healthy Schools website: www.ontario.ca/healthyschools.