



MEMO

To: Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunch Programme Governance Board
From: Gary Basham, Manager Service Delivery, Special Projects
Date: 5 October 2020
Subject: Requests from schools for a non-universal approach to the school lunch programme

Purpose

1. This memo seeks Board guidance on the approach to working with schools who wish to provide lunches to only a portion of their student population.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that you:

a)	note the contents of this memo	Noted
b)	approve the requirement for schools and kura to adopt an all or nothing approach until the end of 2021	Yes/No

Background

3. The intent of Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunch Programme is for lunches to be served to all students in schools with the highest level of disadvantage. This universal approach is a key component to the policy that was approved by Cabinet.
4. The principle intent of this approach is to minimise any stigma that may come with receiving a free lunch. However, interactions with schools as part of the wider expansion of the programme has highlighted that some schools would prefer a non-universal approach to the school lunch programme. Concerns have been raised by a few schools that don't think the whole student population requires the provision of a free lunch and are not confident this proportion of students will eat the lunches provided. This has predominantly been raised by secondary schools. Additional feedback has referenced risks over large amounts of possible waste and comments that, in large schools, stigma is less of an issue.

Case Studies

Awatapu College, Palmerston North – School roll 820 students

5. Awatapu College have requested 300 – 400 lunches are provided on a daily basis. Both the Principal and Board don't feel the entire population need the provision and aren't confident all the students would eat the lunches. Year 12 and 13 students are also allowed off-site during lunchtimes so there is a concern about food surplus and waste. The school also feel they won't be able to cope with the logistics of distributing 820 lunches.

Waitakere College, Auckland – School roll 1,411 students

6. Waitakere College provide lunches with support from their community to around 300 – 400 students two days a week. They are not confident there is a genuine need for the rest of the student population and will only consider joining the programme if provision of lunches is limited to 400 students. The school is also concerned about coping with the logistics of distributing 1,411 lunches.

Options

7. There are two possible options a or b:
 - a. Continue to require schools and kura to adopt an all or nothing approach to the programme (preferred option)

Implementation considerations

As part of the evaluation we would assess the impact of the universal approach and the implications of this approach on secondary schools. If the programme is extended we would relook at this approach.

This option is clearly aligned with the Cabinet direction that lunches are served to all students within a school.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If schools or kura don't think all of their students need a free school lunch we can invite a school that has a real need• Schools we have engaged with will likely continue to meet the need of student lunches internally with support from their community• The programme will continue to remove the stigma around receiving a free lunch for students• All students within a school will eat the same nutritious lunches and experience different foods together• Ensure consistent messaging across the duration of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who need a free school lunch may miss out because their school has opted out

- b. Allow schools and kura to adopt a non-universal approach

Implementation considerations

Depending on the school this could mean only certain year groups would receive a school lunch or students would opt-in to the programme. The approach would need to be signed off by the school Board of Trustees to ensure it met the needs of their community and changes wouldn't be made before the conclusion of the programme.

This option does not align with Cabinet direction that *lunches are served to all students within a school*.



Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food surplus and wastage will be limited • More money will be available to fund additional schools or reduce the ongoing cost of the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may cause a stigma for students who eat free lunches and discourage engagement, undermining the programmes ethos • The programmes impact on nutrition within the school would be limited with a proportion of students using the school canteen or bringing unhealthy options • Operationally this will be difficult as numbers may fluctuate for suppliers depending on the demand for lunches • The universal approach is what we have used since the programme was initiated, making changes creates an inconsistent framework • Students who need a school lunch may miss out • Schools and kura that are part of the pilot programme may want changes to their delivery and schools who have declined may want back into the programme • Inconsistency for families with students across multiple year groups

Next Steps

8. If the Board agrees with the preferred option we will continue to ensure schools/kura adopt the universal approach in upcoming negotiations.
9. If agreement is reached to approve a partial programme, we would develop messages to inform other schools and kura of this option. Once we were clear about the possible cost saving we would consider if additional schools and kura could join the programme.

