



# Free and healthy school lunches programme

## Key nutritional points for suppliers

It is important that lunches are healthy and nutritious. For some learners facing food insecurity, the school lunch will be their regular meal of the day and suppliers have a vital role to play in making sure it is delicious and nutritious.

We know that children's tastes vary. It can be challenging to provide healthy food that children want to eat and getting children to enjoy new foods can take time.

It can also be confusing identifying which foods are healthy, and which should only be offered in limited amounts.

We have worked closely with the Ministry of Health to develop guidelines based on their nutrition guidelines for schools, and will provide more information and support so that suppliers can plan how they will gradually introduce new foods and make lunches healthier over the first six months of the contract.

### Basic requirements

To help plan menus we have classified foods and drinks as green, amber and red.

As a minimum standard, no red items should be include in school lunches. Red items are high in fats, salt and sugar with no nutritional value. They are often highly processed and eating lots of these contributes towards poor health.

Lunches should be made up amber and green items. As suppliers transition towards offering healthier menu option, the proportion of green to amber items should increase and the frequency of amber items per week should decrease.

Red Category Items			
No red items should be included in menus. These items must be replaced before lunch delivery starts.			
	ITEMS	EXAMPLES	ALTERNATIVES
1	Sausages	Sausage rolls, curried sausages	Lean meat eg, chicken/ lamb/ pork/ beef/ mince Meatballs (lean mince) Chicken/lean meat skewers with veggies
2	Chocolate, lollies and confectionery	Chocolate chip cookies, brownies, cakes/muffins with icing or chocolate, fruit leathers (see nutrition guideline for a full definition of confectionery)	Replace with small fruit muffin (no icing or chocolate) ≤100g eg, banana berry muffin with some wholemeal flour
3	Baked items more than twice a week or in larger than recommended portion sizes	Cakes, muffins, protein bars, energy bars, sausage rolls, baked items with icing	Keep baked items to within recommended portions and limit to twice per week.

4	Drinks high in sugar or sweeteners	Smoothies, juices (including 100% juice/no-added sugar), protein shakes, sweetened drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks etc.	Plain milk or water only
5	Deep fried items	Sushi with deep fried protein, Karaage Chicken, chippies, battered fish	Replace with tuna, teriyaki chicken pieces (without added sauces over the top), salmon/other fish, pineapple avocado reduced fat cream cheese

### Amber Category items

These foods may have some nutritional value. They are not part of an everyday diet, but can be included in moderation. Gradually reduce and replace with green items so that over time menus are made up of at least 75 percent green items and 25 percent amber items

Think carefully about portion sizes to make sure you are not adding too much fat, salt and sugar content. Think about replacement for high fibre options.

	ITEMS	EXAMPLES	SUGGESTIONS
1	Packaged items	Popcorn, pretzels, corn chips	Keep to ≤ 800kJ per serving Note: this would also apply to a meal of Nachos
2	Dried fruit	Scroggin, baking, trail mix	≤30g dried fruit as an ingredient or within a fruit and nut mix
3	Processed meats	Ham, salami, smoked chicken, nuggets	Where possible select options ≥3.5HSR  Processed meat (eg, deli or smoked meat, luncheon, loaf) with an HSR of <3.5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ≤ 50 g in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads</li> <li>• ≤ 120 g as a meal</li> </ul> Wholemeal crumbed baked chicken/fish eg, schnitzel
4	Full fat milk products	Full fat varieties of: sour cream, mayonnaise, yoghurt and cheese	Sour cream – reduced or low fat Standard mayonnaise – small amounts on the side Standard yoghurt - ≤ 150 g portion coconut yoghurt- reduced or low fat ≤ 150 g

5	Low fibre	Rice crackers, white bread, white rice, white pasta, couscous	HSR of $\geq 3.5$ for amber crackers
6	Salt	Salt and pepper seasoning	Use minimally as part of a recipe.

## Other Considerations

- » Include some vegetables within every meal.
- » If including baked items, check portion size recommendations as these vary across items.
- » A dried fruit portion, including bliss balls, should be  $\leq 30g$  (eg, if a bliss ball is 20g, no-more than one per serve).
- » Slices, including muesli slices, should be  $\leq 80g$ ; a packaged muesli bar is  $\geq 3.5$ HSR.

## Support and Assistance

The Ministry is working to develop a supportive framework for suppliers to ensure that all learners receive a quality nutritious lunch. This will include:

- » Discussions (via Zoom or Skype) with Ministry of Health or local health worker at the start of the contract to explore your menu options.
- » Advice and feedback from a Ministry in-house nutritionist to review any new great menu ideas
- » A six-month work plan to provide a pathway to nutrition.