

AP 113-1 Nutritional Foods in Schools Rationale

Nutrition plays a vital role in supporting children’s growth, development, learning, and overall well-being. Ensuring that students have access to nutritious foods throughout the school day helps them maintain energy, focus, emotional regulation, and resilience, all of which contribute to their success at school.

Extensive research demonstrates that many long-term health concerns, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and dental problems, are linked to dietary patterns established in childhood. Of particular concern is the increasing prevalence of foods high in refined sugars, saturated fats, and sodium in the diets of young people. At the same time, many children do not receive the essential nutrients needed to support healthy development. Some experience chronic under-nutrition, leading to fatigue, irritability, reduced concentration, and increased susceptibility to illness. Over time, inadequate nutrition can contribute to lower school achievement, diminished self-esteem, and poor overall health outcomes.

Given the strong connection between nutrition and learning, schools play a significant role in promoting health and preventing disease. As daily environments where children eat, socialize, and learn, schools have both the opportunity and responsibility to model and support healthy eating habits. This includes providing access to nutritious foods, creating supportive eating environments, and reinforcing positive attitudes toward food and well-being.

The Abbotsford School District recognizes the seriousness of changing dietary habits among children and the potential long-term health implications for this generation. In response, the district is committed to offering nutritious foods through school programs and services, providing nutrition education from Kindergarten through Grade 12, and ensuring that the food environment aligns with principles of health, safety, and inclusion.

By establishing clear standards for the foods and beverages offered, served, and sold in schools—supported by tools such as the BC School Food Toolkit—the district aims to cultivate a culture that values healthy eating and supports every student’s ability to learn, grow, and thrive.