



## Edgewater Elementary Nutrition Policy

**June 1, 2015**

*"... Healthy eating during childhood and adolescence promotes optimal health and contributes to physical and intellectual development into adulthood. A comprehensive school health approach can help students attain their full educational potential and good health by providing them with the skills, social support and environmental reinforcement they need to adopt lifelong healthy eating habits. Nutrition should be an integral part of a student's education at every grade level and be consistent with the comprehensive school health approach. A healthy lifestyle, which includes eating nutritious foods, should be fostered and promoted in all schools ..."* excerpt from the LBPSB Nutrition Policy.

Here at Edgewater Elementary, we share the school board's vision of integrating healthy eating habits and nutrition education into the daily life, educational activities and processes of our school. We are committed to ongoing staff development, evaluation of practice and revision of protocols, as well as student and parent implication in an evolved approach to nutrition education, including allergy awareness and protection.

A school's nutrition policy touches on many aspects of school life and for proper implementation requires the implication, consensus and support of all stakeholders. Edgewater's school based nutrition committee has created the following guidelines, with the expectation that all members of the Edgewater community will be made aware of them and make concerted efforts to ensure that all classroom and extra-curricular activities involving any aspect of nutrition will reflect the philosophy therein.

The LBPSB Nutrition policy states one of its goals to be, *“to create an optimal state of nutrition awareness in the learning environment, and to educate students that choosing nutritious foods every day will prove their learning and living capabilities.”* As well, LBPSB policy encourages all suppliers of student food items (including parents) *“to provide the student with healthier alternative selections to high fat, high sugar and empty calorie foods... Parents are encouraged to provide their children with a healthy breakfast before school and to send nutritious foods to school as snacks, lunches or for special events.”*

Edgewater staff share these goals and this is expressed in the expectation that at school, students will be encouraged to eat only healthy, nutritional snacks during official “snack periods” at school. Chocolate, candy, high sugar content items, high fat and high sodium snack foods will not be permitted during morning snack time, and parents are strongly discouraged from ever including these less healthy foods in their children’s lunchboxes wherever possible. A non-exhaustive list of suggested “acceptable” healthy snacks is found in Appendix A of this policy.

Students who do not have anything in their lunch box that constitutes a healthy snack will be directed by their teacher to obtain a healthier choice from the main office, as long as this is only an occasional request. The school does not have the budget to provide healthy snacks to large numbers of students every day. Should a child repeatedly arrive at school with snacks that are not considered appropriate (see Appendix A) the teacher will email parents to begin a dialogue on the issue. If necessary, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to discuss the situation and arrive at a quick solution.

LBPSB nutrition policy gives schools the leeway to decide where they stand along the allergy debate “continuum”. *“Some elementary schools may choose to provide, within their capabilities, an environment which is nut-controlled. This is a decision made by the individual school communities.”* Based on the decision of the Edgewater Elementary governing board, this school is considered a “nut-controlled” environment. As stated in the Edgewater Safety Policy and Parent Handbook:

*“Due to the large number of students with nut allergies Edgewater Elementary School has been declared a nut controlled environment. All students, staff, and visitors are asked to refrain from bringing nuts, or products containing nuts, into the school. Effective May 2014, those products labelled with the phrase “may contain traces of” are included in this ban.”*

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Edgewater staff do everything in their power to ensure that this regulation is respected. From May 2014 onwards, all staff have been and will continue to be reminded that the nut-control ban extends to items labeled “may contain traces of nuts”, due to the possibility of triggering an air borne allergic reaction or cross contamination. We also must count on the cooperation of parents to ensure that lunchboxes do not contain “contraband” items (food containing nuts),

because it is next to impossible to check the contents of 450+ lunchboxes every day. Students are instructed never to share food, and a daily regimen of hand washing before and after eating is encouraged in all classes. Students and lunch staff together make an effort to wash all work surfaces where food has had contact before the end of the lunch period. In homerooms which house students with severe allergies, students are and will continue to be sensitized by teachers as to the extra precautions required to ensure the safety and security of their classmates.

All of these precautions notwithstanding, students with severe (life threatening) allergies should be reminded by parents that they should NEVER eat anything that does not come from their own home, unless their parents and the school have given them explicit permission to do so (ie. in the case of the daycare “snack” program, where stringent efforts are made to ensure foods are hypoallergenic).

There is no way a school can guarantee, even in the presence of a “nut controlled” regulation, that any food coming from outside sources has not been contaminated with allergens. Highly-vigilant parents of children with severe allergies are the first to admit how difficult it is to avoid contact with allergens in food. Well meaning parents of children who do not have allergies may not understand the need for extreme vigilance in food preparation, and students with severe allergies could be put at serious risk by ingesting foods from a source other than their own home. In high school, students are encouraged to be proactive about inquiring as to the ingredients of foods sold in school cafeterias, and to take ownership of their own dietary requirements. This is a skill that requires maturity and the ability to properly judge potential consequences, which not all elementary school aged children possess. Prohibition seems the best way to ensure that students with severe allergies are kept safe in the elementary school environment.

We have found in the past with students who fit this profile that it is very helpful if parents provide to the classroom teacher a supply of special snacks that meet their child’s dietary requirements, so that their child will not be “left out” of any celebrations. In the case of any large scale events, (ie. Daycare Pot luck Dinner”, breakfast with Santa, etc.) the school counts on the cooperation of the parents of students affected by allergies to arrive at mutually agreeable solutions, and to feel comfortable reminding school staff members of their child’s dietary requirements when such events are scheduled.

A further tenet of the LBPSB nutrition policy which is supported by Edgewater’s school based policy is the following: *“When students are present, all partners (sponsors, donors and volunteers) in the school community have a responsibility in promoting and providing healthy foods in LBPSB schools...The “school community” includes but is not limited to the classroom, the daycare, the school, the home, the school board, volunteer committees, extra-curricular*

*activity groups, local businesses, churches, CLSC and health centres, as they affect student life...*  
For in-school celebrations, holidays, end-of-school-year festivities and other special occasions, every effort should be made to include nutritious foods, as per the Food and Nutrition Policy Specifications.

There is currently an unwritten tradition at Edgewater, as in many other elementary schools that cakes/cupcakes/baked treats are sent in so that children's birthdays can be "celebrated" in the classroom. While the kindness and warmth of this gesture is unmistakable and obviously heartfelt, the presence of such sweet treats in the classroom context poses significant challenges from a nutritional standpoint.

Students with food allergies, students with preexisting health conditions like diabetes, students with hyperactivity disorders, even students with behavioral challenges, can be adversely affected by the introduction of such snacks in the classroom environment. In light of the school and school board's nutrition policies, the school-based nutrition committee would like to strongly encourage parents to reevaluate their choices when selecting snacks for special occasions, including birthdays, class parties, and holiday celebrations.

Edgewater staff are in agreement that, for nutritional, safety, as well as socio-emotional reasons, birthday treats are not recommended and should not be sent in from home for distribution to students. For many parents, this will be a change in tradition and practice, and we count on the support of Edgewater families in understanding that this decision has been made in the best interest of students.

Highly sugared snacks are not recommended, but may be permitted at special times of year (Christmas/Halloween) at the discretion of the school staff. Parents are encouraged to respect the following guidelines in these cases. The snacks should always be portion controlled (bite size). As Edgewater is a "nut-controlled" school, any "special occasion snacks" should not contain peanuts or any other nuts (see section on "food allergies" for more information). It is highly recommended, for reasons of hygiene and to avoid cross contamination, that snacks are individually wrapped. For suggestions regarding more healthy alternatives for special occasion snacks, please see Appendix B.

The School Board supports teacher-based initiatives that promote healthy eating, according to the Food & Nutrition Policy. .. Nutrition education will include but not be limited to promoting and explaining wise food choices. This may include understanding portion control, food labels and advertising in order to ensure the minimum daily consumption of essential nutrients and to establish lifelong eating habits.

Edgewater Elementary staff will renew their commitment to the promotion of nutrition education through the establishment of several initiatives in the coming school years:

- (1) School wide participation in Nutrition month activities (March)
- (2) Submission of grant proposals seeking funding for Nutrition projects
- (3) Discussion of nutrition policy at parent teacher communication events
- (4) Reduction in the number of special events involving food, particularly non-nutritious food (including fundraising)
- (5) Creation of a standing Nutrition committee (school-based) to oversee the implementation of the school's nutrition policy, to address questions from staff and to provide guidance on nutritional issues, to encourage staff to seek out financial support.

***Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you require clarification on any of the points contained in this policy.***

## **Appendix A                  Recommended snacks/Foods to avoid**

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*Recommended snacks:*

Fruit (sliced, sectioned wherever possible)

Vegetables (with or without dip)

Yogurt

Cheese and crackers

*Please try to avoid:*

- . Candy
- . Commercial cookies with icing, chocolate coated, “sandwich” type
- . Commercial snack cakes
- . Fruit drinks
- . Gum
- . Chips (fried)
- . Donuts
- . Slush
- . Poutine
- . Pogos
- . Sugar coated cereals
- . Sugar coated items such as: peanuts, nuts, popcorn
- . beverages with high caffeine
- . Deep fried foods
- . Chocolate <70% cocoa, the first ingredient should not be sugar
- . Popsicles
- . Soft drinks
- . Sports drinks

## Appendix B - Healthy treats for birthdays and classroom parties

\* Popcorn cups: Have your child help decorate plain 12-oz. paper cups with stickers, glitter glue or even his photo, and then fill with homemade popcorn. Alternatively, decorate small paper bags or purchase movie theater-style popcorn boxes or bags.

\* Yogurt parfaits: In clear plastic cups, alternate layers of your child’s favorite yogurt and fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries or mangos. Top with a cupcake topper. (And don’t forget spoons!).

\* Mini muffins: Carrot, blueberry and banana are all great choices. Use all or part whole-wheat flour or add ground flaxseeds for a nutritional boost.

\* Banana bread: Cut in slices like cake, sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve with fruit salad.

\* **Pear bread:** Perfect for a fall party; slice up some fresh pears and add a few to each plate. I made it with white whole wheat flour and vegetable oil. With 2 cups of sugar, it tastes more like cake than bread. I'd reduce the amount of sugar next time and add more pears.

\* **Chocolate zucchini bread:** Don't try to hide the fact that there's zucchini in here! Instead, let your child (carefully!) help grate it, then bring in a whole zucchini for the class to see, touch and smell. I was naughty and added chocolate chips to this recipe; it's for a party, after all.

\* Fresh fruit served in cupcake wrappers, waffle cones or waffle bowls.

\* Guacamole: Mash avocado, squeeze on fresh lime juice, then mix in chopped tomatoes, diced red onions and a smattering of sea salt. Serve with multigrain chips and veggie sticks (celery, carrots and red peppers).

\* Berries with fresh whipped cream: Take individual clear plastic glasses and fill half way with any mixture of strawberries, blueberries and blackberries. Top with a dollop of freshly whipped cream.

\* **Fruit kabobs with vanilla yogurt dip:** Pick your child's favorite fruits—strawberries, blueberries, pineapple, kiwi, grapes, and melon, for example—and assemble colorful fruit kabobs. Serve with vanilla yogurt dipping sauce.

\* **Magic fruit wands:** Similar to fruit kabobs but made to look like a magic wand, with a whimsical star fruit at the top.

\* **Homemade fruit roll-ups:** No corn syrup or artificial food coloring; just pure fruit, the way it should be. While the prep is quick, it will take hours for these to set so leave plenty of time. And do a test batch ahead of time just in case.

\* **Cinnamon tortillas with fruit salsa:** Take wheat flour tortillas and brush with melted butter. Sprinkle the tortillas with cinnamon sugar; cut each tortilla into 8 wedges and bake on an ungreased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until crisp. For the fruit salsa, pick any combination of your kid's favorite fruits—apples, strawberries, kiwis, pineapple and blackberries all work well—dice and mix with a little sugar and lime juice. Serve salsa in

mini plastic cups or bowls with the tortilla chips on the side on paper plates for dipping.

\* Frozen yogurt tubes served with fresh fruit

\* **Strawberries and Cream Elves**: Strawberries filled with a dab of cream cheese mixed with fruit spread and chocolate chip eyes. Too cute for words!

\* Yogurt parfait bar: Serve vanilla or strawberry yogurt in cups. Set out toppings such as fresh berries, bananas, granola and shredded unsweetened coconut.

\* Dark-chocolate dipped strawberries

\* **Pizza Pretzel Bites**: Yes, its pizza—but at least it packs some nutrition, especially if paired with a tomato marinara dipping sauce.

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