



FOOD SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

Context

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a consolidated reference to all directives related to food services in Central Okanagan Public Schools for use by Principals and Vice-Principals. These sources include:

1. [Food Premises Regulation \(BC Public Health Act\)](#)

The Food Premises Regulation outlines requirements for facilities where food is prepared, handled or sold. The regulation DOES NOT apply to most school settings, including schools where food is prepared or served by voluntary caterers for functions or gatherings limited to members of their own organization and invited guests. [Food Premises Regulation, Part 1, Section 2 Application (c)]

Schools that require equipment to process, store, and display food need to meet health requirements outlined in the processing, storage and display section of the regulation [Food Premises Regulation, Division 3, 14]

2. [Requirements for Food Premises Approval \(Interior Health\)](#) (*Scroll down to: Temporary food services approval and permit.*)

Temporary food services (such as special events or short-term food sales) may also require review or approval by Interior Health depending on the type of food being served.

Interior Health Environmental Public Health provides approval and permitting requirements for food premises within the Interior Health region.

3. [School Food Toolkit](#)

The BC School Food Toolkit provides guidance and resources to support safe, inclusive, and healthy school food environments.

The toolkit includes information related to:

- food safety practices in schools
- accommodating food allergies and dietary needs
- food programs and meal initiatives
- inclusive school food environments
- fundraising and events involving food

Procedures

1. [Food Service in Schools](#)

When food is prepared, provided, or sold to students at school, the Principal is required to establish and monitor a process to ensure that:

- 1.1. **Approved Food Providers** - Any caterer, or contractor, providing food to a school, holds a valid permit issued by the Interior Health Environmental Public Health Office. Refer queries to (250) 469-7061 or by email to: EPHDirect@interiorhealth.ca
- 1.2. **Food Safety Training** - A volunteer or staff member who *prepares* food for students on a regular schedule must have completed the FoodSafe Level I course. FoodSafe training information is available at: <https://foodsafe.ca>
- 1.3. **Compliance with Food Safety Requirements:** Students, volunteers, or staff preparing, handling, or otherwise making food ready for eating on the premises abide by the Public Health Act Food Premises Regulations.
- 1.4. **Safe Food Temperatures:** Foods must be maintained at safe temperatures during storage, transport, and service. Safe holding temperatures include:
 - Cold foods:** 4°C (40°F) or colder
 - Hot foods:** 60°C (140°F) or hotter(Food temperatures must be maintained until food is served to students; or food must be served to students within 2 hours of receiving.)
Frozen Food Storage: Every operator of food premises must ensure that frozen food is stored or displayed at a temperature of not more than -18°C.
- 1.5. **High-Risk Foods:** Foods that require additional care to prevent foodborne illness to include: meat, fish, seafood, poultry, eggs, and dairy products. These foods should be given particular care and attention.
- 1.6. **Safe Food Processing:** Every operator of food premises that processes food must ensure that the food is processed in a manner that makes it safe to eat.

2. School Meal Programs

- 2.1 School Food Programs, which include breakfast, lunch, snack and grocery programs, are supported through national and provincial funding as well as through community grants and partnerships. Where possible, school food programs are built to offer **universal** access to food.
- 2.2 **Targeted** programs for students experiencing severe food insecurity are also in place. These programs include packed lunches and grocery backpacks.

The School Principal or designate will provide the District Coordinator responsible for overseeing all School Food Programs, with the total number of targeted lunches and/or bagged groceries required.

For packed lunches, the school Principal or designate will keep record of names of students who are supported through this program. This will be done following consultation with school-based staff, counselors, parents, noon-hour supervisors, support staff or other agencies with knowledge of priority families. MyEd provides secure method for maintaining group list.

Criteria for identifying students who are living in households with severe food insecurity, include but are not limited to: family income, socio-economic status, BC Ministry of Children and Family Development involvement, etc.

- 2.3 The Principal or designate will establish the location where students will pick up packed lunches and/or groceries. The location for pick up should be determined with consideration for student privacy. It is strongly encouraged that students will have access to their packed lunches as soon after delivery as possible.
- 2.4 The Principal or designate will communicate, to the District Coordinator responsible for overseeing all School Food Programs, any concerns regarding the meals provided as well as increases or decreases to the number of meals required.
- 2.5 The Principal or designate will establish and monitor a process for receiving and filing a copy of the invoice for each meal delivery at the school.

3. Food Sales in Schools

- 3.1 The Principal of a school that offers *the public* food for sale must ensure approval of the food premises has been granted by Interior Health. Interior Health can issue a temporary food service permit for food sale events. For help with this, contact the Interior Health Environmental Public Health Office at (250) 469-7061 or EPHDirect@interiorhealth.ca
- 3.2 The Principal must establish and monitor a process to ensure that the [Guidelines for General Nutrition](#) found in the *School Food Toolkit* are followed. This will include promoting foods listed under serve frequently lists while limiting foods listed under serve infrequently and in smaller serving sizes.

Relevant Board Policy: 423: Health Promoting Schools

Developed by: Assistant Superintendent responsible for Health-Promoting Schools

Date Agreed: September 1, 2003

Date Amended: November 2004, August 2007, August 2008, August 2009, August 2011, December 2013, October 2015, October 17, 2018, October 19, 2021, March 14, 2023, April 2026

Related Documents: Refer to Context Section above