

Every Body Eats

A universal school food program

Position Statement

Purpose

The Every Body Eats Position Statement is intended to guide our behaviour and decision making whenever feeding children at school. The overall principle is to provide wholesome, nutritious food at school that promotes student health, learning and academic achievement in a non-stigmatizing and equitable manner.

This position statement is a document that can be shared to communicate our position on food security in our organization as we enter into conversation with individuals, local organizations and other funders regarding supporting our food security work.

Background

The South Shore School Food Project is committed to working with school communities in Lunenburg and Queens County to offer wholesome, tasty food in school cafeterias so students can thrive in health and learning. We recognize that Nova Scotia's child poverty rate is 24%, close to 1 in 4, more specifically Lunenburg County is 23.5% and Queens County is 29.3%) 1. and we know that food insecurity has increased by an additional 39% at the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic 2.. According to Stats Canada, approximately 12% of Nova Scotia households with children were food insecure. This means households are sometimes uncertain of having enough food to meet the needs of all family members. Therefore, some families rely heavily on school food to ensure their children are nourished. The School Food Project plans to provide a universal school food program called Every Body Eats to support learning by feeding children who come to school without food for a variety of reasons.

Values

Values guide the Every Body Eats universal school food program. We value:

- The health and well-being of all students.
- Nutritious food provision rather than selling food for profit.
- Providing wholesome, tasty food to all students in a non-judgemental, non-stigmatizing manner.
- Students having autonomy and independence to choose what to eat.
- The development of menus that support cultural diversity.
- Supporting local and Nova Scotia farmers and producers. (See local food position statement-in-development)
- Partnerships and collaboration with families, community groups, businesses and government.
- Kindness and a welcoming school food environment.
- The interactions Food Service Workers have with students.
- The different needs of each school community when feeding its students.
- Parents' rights/agency to decide what is best for their child.

Every Body Eats is a universal school food program to be delivered to students in the South Shore Regional Centre for Education to reduce household food insecurity. It will include breakfast, recess and lunch.

Position Statements OR Our Position

It is our position, or view, that:

A universal school food program that includes breakfast, recess and lunch can sensitively address hunger in schools and contribute to the learning of all students. School food must be provided in a non-stigmatizing, non-identifying way.

Providing healthy school food influences learning outcomes.

We know that students and school communities bring their unique voices, needs, capacities and differences which must be respected.

School food is not for profit, rather it is to provide nutrition to every body. A regional equity fund is key to the success and sustainability of this program. We will engage with community partners and funders.

Every Body Eats school food program supports all students and especially the most vulnerable students.

All students are welcomed in cafeterias.

Food Service Workers contribute to the welcoming culture of the cafeteria and how students feel about accessing the cafeteria.

School adults/staff can positively or negatively influence the way students feel about eating.

Communication of all aspects of this policy statement and accompanying procedure is paramount to the success and acceptance of this program. The details of this position statement and accompanying procedure will be clearly communicated to students, school staff, Food Service Workers, families, community groups, government departments and funders.

A robust training package will be provided to all school staff.

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