



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Healthy Food and Drink School Principal Survey Report 2019

Final report, revised April 2021

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Public and Aboriginal Health Division
Western Australian Department of Health

This document has been corrected on:
Pages: 5, 14, 15, 21, 22; and Table: 3 (page15).
June 2021

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Executive Summary

The Western Australian School Canteen Association (Inc.) (WASCA) is funded by the Department of Health to provide support to schools to implement the Department of Education's *Healthy Food and Drink (HFD) Policy* (the 'Policy'), through the Healthy Food and Drink project.

Principals of all public schools, including Independent Public Schools, are required to implement the HFD Policy, which applies to all school settings including canteens/food services, classroom rewards, and classroom cooking activities, school camps and excursions.

Part of each school's reporting to the Department of Education is a short survey comprising of six questions relating to the HFD Policy. The main objective for incorporating the HFD survey is to evaluate the Policy and provide critical information about the return on investment of the HFD project, as well as guide the WASCA's activities and services provided to schools.

In October 2019, the Department of Education sent an electronic communication to 794 Western Australian (WA) public schools advising them of the requirement to complete an online survey relating to the HFD Policy and food service practices in their schools.

Key findings

A total of 450 schools completed the 2019 HFD survey (56.7% response rate).

Schools with a Healthy Food and Drink Policy

- The majority of schools (68.7%) reported having a HFD Policy, 17.3% were in the process of developing a Policy, and 11.1% of schools did not have a Policy.
- Schools with a canteen/food service were significantly more likely to have a HFD Policy in place compared to schools with no food service (75.1% compared to 62.8% respectively).
- The majority of metropolitan (71.2%) and regional schools (69.8%) that responded currently had a HFD Policy in place.

Provision of food and drink

- 57.0% of schools with canteens/food services met all policy requirements related to the menu. K-12 schools and Primary schools reporting the highest levels of compliance with all policy requirements, 100% (2) and 62.6% (122) respectively.
- Primary schools were significantly more likely to meet all four traffic light criteria than high schools (secondary and district schools) (62.6% compared to 46.7%)
- Almost all schools reported their canteen/food service menu consisted of a minimum of 60% green food and drinks (95.2%) and a maximum of 40% amber food and drinks (95.1%), with no significant differences between primary schools, high schools and other schools.
- Compliance was slightly lower for offering savoury commercial amber products no more than two days per week (84.3% of all schools with a canteen / food service).
- High schools (secondary and district high schools) were significantly more likely to have red food and drinks on their canteen/food service menu than primary schools (36.1% compared to 15.7%).
- There were no significant differences in reported compliance between metropolitan and regional schools for the canteen/food service menu:
 - consisting of a minimum of 60% green food and drinks (95.9% and 93.6% respectively);
 - consisting of a maximum of 40% amber food and drinks (95.8% and 93.5% respectively);
 - offering savoury commercial amber products, no more than two days per week (83.4% and 86.4% respectively);
 - containing red food and drinks, even on an occasional basis (21.4% and 24.7% respectively).

Promoting healthy eating in schools

- The most popular strategy used to promote healthy eating by all schools except secondary schools, was to 'run healthy eating programs such as *Crunch&Sip*[®] and school kitchen gardens' (80.2% of all schools).

- In secondary schools, the most popular strategy was to ‘work with the school canteen to adopt the Health Promoting Schools framework’ (80.3% of secondary schools).

Staff training

- Completed traffic light training was lower among canteen/food service employers compared to canteen/food service supervisors (80.9% compared to 93.1%).
- Significantly more canteen supervisors were traffic light trained in metropolitan schools (96.2%) than in regional schools (85.7%).
- FoodSafe training was completed by 98.9% of canteen/food service supervisors, compared to 80.2% of canteen/food service volunteers.

Recommendations

Overall, the 2019 survey results are encouraging, and reflect the support being provided to schools by the WASCA to encourage HFD Policy compliance and implementation. However, there remains room for improvement in regard to:

- removing red food and drink items from canteens/food services, particularly in high schools;
- supporting high schools to meet the other policy criteria requirements (canteen having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, and no more than 2 days per week of savoury commercial amber foods); and
- increasing the number of regional canteen/food service supervisors who complete traffic light training.

The 2019 survey results and identified areas for improvement are consistent with the 2018 survey and reflect the ongoing challenges of implementing the Policy.

Continued monitoring of the HFD environment in schools is essential to assist in addressing the following recommendations for the Department of Education and Department of Health:

1. The Department of Education continues to administer the annual HFD Policy implementation survey of public schools and invite the Department of Health to analyse the results.

2. The Department of Education continues to implement strategies designed to increase the response rate for future HFD School Principal Surveys (e.g. follow up reminder emails, ensure survey is open for appropriate amount of time, ensure links are working correctly, ensure respondents are aware of how long the survey will take to complete, ensure respondents are aware of the purpose and significance of the survey, etc). In addition, it is recommended that strategies are implemented to attract new schools to complete the survey in 2020.
3. The Department of Education and the WASCA continue to make the survey results publicly available (e.g. on the Department of Education HFD web page and the WASCA webpage) as was done in 2018.
4. Continuation of quarterly HFD Reference Group meetings to ensure the Department of Education, Department of Health and the WASCA are kept informed and updated on the status of the HFD Policy progress throughout the school year. In addition, the Reference Group continues to:
 - a. work with the WASCA to provide targeted support to high schools to meet HFD policy criteria, (particularly to remove red items from canteen menus), for example:
 - i. Tailored training sessions for secondary schools only to ensure relevance of topics and networking opportunities
 - ii. WASCA to develop marketing messages and fact sheets specifically focussing on red food and drinks; reminding schools red items are 'off the menu'; WASCA to consider distribution pathways
 - iii. Develop marketing materials (e.g. posters) suitable for high schools promoting healthy eating
 - b. work with the WASCA to provide targeted support to all schools to increase traffic light training (particularly in regional schools); for example, WASCA to increase engagement with health professionals in regional WA to promote HFD policy compliance and support such as the traffic light training; including promoting training opportunities via social media pages (e.g. My Healthy Kimberley).
 - c. work with WASCA to provide targeted support to all schools, i.e. those with and without canteens, to increase the number of schools with a written Policy for the provision of healthy food and drinks.

Background

Schools play a key role in introducing, supporting, and teaching children about healthy eating. The World Health Organization's Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity¹ highlights schools as an important setting for creating a healthy food environment. The Department of Education's mandatory Healthy Food and Drink (HFD) Policy² applies to all WA public schools (including Independent Public Schools) and utilises a traffic light system to classify food and drinks (*Appendix 1*):

- Green food and drinks are an excellent source of nutrients, contain less saturated fat and/or sugar and/or salt and help to avoid intake of excess energy (kJ) and must comprise at least 60% of the menu.
- Amber food and drinks have some nutritional value but also contain moderate levels of salt, sugar and/or saturated fat. Amber foods should be eaten in moderation and must comprise no more than 40% of the menu. Savoury commercial amber products must not be offered more than twice a week.
- Red food and drinks lack adequate nutritional value, are high in saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt and contribute to excess energy and must not be offered on canteen and food service menus.
Red categorised food and drinks will not be provided to students unless essential to learning programs.

The Department of Health funded HFD Project aims to assist schools in maintaining and strengthening policies and practices that support the provision and promotion of healthy food and drinks, particularly in canteens/food services. The WASCA have been contracted to deliver the HFD Project by either the Department of Health or Department of Education since 2006. For the period 2007 to 2015, there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education and

¹ World Health Organization (2016). Healthy Food and Drink Policy, [Available from: <https://www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/publications/taking-action-childhood-obesity-report/en/>]

² Department of Education (2018). Healthy Food and Drink in Public Schools Policy, [Available from: <http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/policies/healthy-food-and-drink-policy.en?cat-id=3457102>]

the Department of Health. In 2015, the HFD Reference Group was established to facilitate information sharing and discussions amongst the key stakeholders for this project.

As part of the Department of Education's reporting systems, an annual survey relating to the canteen/food service and the HFD Policy has been conducted since 2012. Following consultation with the HFD Reference Group and a formal request from the Department of Health, the survey questions were updated for the 2016 survey, and the same questions have been utilised for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 surveys. Information from the survey is an integral component of the evaluation of the HFD Project, providing critical information about the return on investment as well as guiding the WASCA's services and key areas for the Department of Education and the WASCA to focus.

Methods

Survey

Consistent with the previous School Principal Surveys, an electronic communication was sent by the Department of Education to 794 WA public schools in late October 2019. All principals have responsibility for the implementation of the HFD Policy in the provision of healthy food and drinks and ensuring that the canteen/food service menu complies with Policy requirements. The survey contained six questions relating to the HFD Policy and food service practices in the school:

1. Does your school have a written policy for the provision of healthy food and drinks?

- No, our school does not have a policy
- Our school is in the process of developing a policy
- Yes, our school has a policy
- Unsure

2. What, if anything, does your school do to promote healthy eating? (check all that apply)

- Include nutrition advice or information in the school newsletter at least once per term
- Conduct healthy P&C fundraising events (i.e. do not use 'red' items such as chocolates)
- Organise whole school events such as a health/nutrition campaign/event, theme day etc.
- Run healthy eating programs such as *Crunch&Sip*[®] or a school kitchen garden
- Invite qualified guest speakers to address students, parents and/or staff about healthy eating
- Work with the school canteen to adopt the Health Promoting Schools framework
- Not a priority, do nothing specific
- Other, please specify

3. Does your school operate a canteen/food service?

- Yes
- No

4. *Does your school canteen/food service menu (answer choices Yes, No, or Unsure):*

- consist of a minimum of 60% 'green' food and drinks?
- consist of a maximum of 40% 'amber' food and drinks?
- offer savoury commercial amber products no more than two days per week?
- contain 'red' food and drinks, even on an occasional basis?

5. *Have the following people in your school community completed Traffic Light Training provided by the WA School Canteen Association Inc.? (answer choices: Yes, No, or Unsure)*

- Canteen/food service supervisor?
- Employer (e.g. P&C representative)?

6. *Have the following people participated in FoodSafe training (or its equivalent)? (answer choices Yes, No, Unsure)*

- Canteen/food service supervisor?
- Canteen/food service volunteers?

Responses to the above questions were de-identified by the Department of Education before providing the raw data to the Department of Health for analysis.

Data analysis

Frequency tables were prepared in Microsoft Excel to describe the proportions of schools meeting each of the Policy requirements. Survey responses were compared using a Chi Square test of independence to examine whether compliance with the HFD Policy varied by school location or type. To provide balanced groups of school types for Chi Square test comparisons, secondary (n=66) and district (n=24) high schools were combined as 'High Schools', and education support schools (n=36), specialist schools (n=1), and K-12 schools (n=3) were combined as 'Other Schools'. Responses of 'Unsure' were excluded from all Chi-square statistical comparisons. Where contingency (frequency) tables contained values less than five, a Fishers exact probability value was calculated. Probability values less than 0.05 were accepted as being statistically significant. All data are presented as unweighted percentages.

Results

School type and location (Table 1)

- Completed surveys were returned by 450 schools (56.7% response rate).
- Of these, 286 (63.5%) were from metropolitan schools and 164 (36.4%) from regional schools. A similar proportion of metropolitan and country schools completed the survey in 2018.
- A similar proportion of primary, secondary, district high, education support, specialist and K-12 schools completed the 2018 and 2017 survey.
- Fewer regional primary schools responded in 2019 compared to 2018 (115 compared to 137).

Table 1: Locations and types of schools, HFD School Principal Survey 2019

Schools (n=450)	Metro schools (n=286) n (%)	Regional schools (n=164) n (%)
Primary school (n=320)	205 (64.1%)	115 (35.9%)
Secondary school (n=66)	48 (72.7%)	18 (27.3%)
District high school (n=24)	1 (4.2%)	23 (95.8%)
Education support (n=36)	30 (83.3%)	6 (16.7%)
Specialist school (n=1)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
K-12 schools (n=3)	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Total	286 (100%)	164 (100%)

Written policy for the provision of healthy food and drinks (Table 2)

- The majority of schools (68.7%) reported having a HFD Policy, 17.3% were in the process of developing a Policy, and 11.1% of schools did not have a Policy.

- Schools with a canteen/food service (64.3% of all schools) were more likely to have a HFD Policy than schools with no food service, and this was statistically significant (75.1% compared to 62.8% respectively).
- A similar proportion of metropolitan schools and regional schools had a HFD Policy in place (71.2% and 69.8% respectively).

Table 2: Proportion of schools with a written Policy for the provision of healthy food and drinks, HFD School Principal Survey 2019

	Have a Policy	No Policy
All schools (n=450)	309 (68.7%)	50 (11.1%)
Schools with a canteen/food service (n = 286)	211 (75.1%)^a	70 (24.9%)^a
Schools without a canteen/food service (n = 164)	98 (62.8%)^a	58 (37.2%)^a
Location of school		
Metropolitan	198 (71.2%)	80 (28.8%)
Regional	111 (69.8%)	48 (30.2%)
Type of school		
Primary	224 (72.3%)	86 (27.7%)
High schools*	61 (68.5%)	28 (31.5%)
Other**	24 (63.2%)	14 (36.8%)
Secondary	46 (69.7%)	20 (30.3%)
District high school	15 (65.2%)	8 (34.8%)
Education support	20 (58.8%)	14 (41.2%)
Specialist school	1 (100)	0 (0%)
K-12 school	3 (100%)	0 (0%)

^a statistically significant according to a Chi Squared Test or Fishers Exact Test (p<0.05) comparing schools with a canteen/food service; 'In the process of developing a Policy' was combined with 'No Policy' for statistical comparisons; 'Unsure' responses were excluded from statistical comparisons. * High schools includes secondary and district high schools, combined for Chi Squared test; ** Other schools includes schools identified as 'education support schools', 'specialists' schools' and 'K-12 schools', combined for Chi Squared test There were no statistically significant differences according to a Chi Squared Test or Fishers Exact Test (p<0.05) comparing location of school or type of school.

Schools with canteens/food services that meet the HFD Policy traffic light criteria (Table 3)

- 57.0% of all schools with canteens / food services met all HFD Policy requirements (canteen having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, no more than 2 days per week of savoury commercial amber foods and no red foods or drinks).
- Primary schools were significantly more likely to meet all four HFD traffic light Policy requirements (63.6%), compared to high schools (46.7%)

Table 3: Proportion of schools meeting traffic light criteria

	Menu meets all traffic light criteria [^]	Menu meets traffic light criteria except no red food and drinks ^{^^}
	(%)	(%)
All schools with a canteen/food service *(n = 286)	163 (57.0%)	37 (12.9%)
School location		
Metropolitan schools with a canteen/food service	117 (58.5%)	27 (13.5%)
Regional schools with a canteen/food service	46 (53.5%)	10 (11.6%)
Type of school		
Primary schools with a canteen/food service	122 (62.6%) ^a	19 (9.7%)
High schools ^{**} with a canteen/food service	35 (46.7%) ^a	15 (25.0%)
Other schools ^{***} with a canteen/food service	6 (55.7%)	3 (18.8%)
Secondary schools with a canteen/food service	28 (46.7%)	11 (18.3%)
District high school schools with a canteen/food service	7 (46.7%)	4 (26.7%)
Education support schools with a canteen/food service	4 (28.6%)	3 (21.4%)
K-12 school with a canteen/food service	2 (100%)	0 (0.0%)

^a statistically significant according to a Chi Squared Test or Fishers Exact Test (p<0.05) comparing primary schools to high schools; ^{**} 'Unsure' responses were included in proportion analysis, however, excluded from statistical comparisons, ^{**} High schools includes secondary and district high schools, combined for Chi Squared test; ^{***} Other schools includes schools identified as 'education support schools', 'specialists' schools' and 'K-12 schools', combined for Chi Squared test, [^] Meeting all traffic light criteria was defined as the canteen having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, no more than 2 days per week of savoury commercial amber foods and no red foods. ^{^^} meeting all traffic light criteria except no red foods was defined as the canteen having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, no more than 2 days per week of savoury commercial amber foods, but the menu containing red food or drinks even on an occasional basis.

Schools that meet canteen/food service HFD Policy requirements (Table 4)

Provision of food and drink

- A large majority of schools reported their canteen/food service menu consisted of a minimum of 60% green food and drinks (95.2%) and a maximum of 40% amber food and drinks (95.1%), with no significant differences between primary schools, high schools and other schools.
- High schools (secondary and district high schools) were more likely (36.1%) to have red food and drinks on their canteen/food service menu than primary schools (15.7%); this difference was statistically significant ($p= 0.0004$).
- There were no significant differences in reported compliance between metropolitan and regional schools, for the canteen/food service menu:
 - consisting of a minimum of 60% green food and drinks (95.9% and 93.6% respectively);
 - consisting of a maximum of 40% amber food and drinks (95.8% and 93.5% respectively);
 - offering amber savoury commercial amber products, no more than two days per week (83.4% and 86.4% respectively);
 - containing red food and drinks, even on an occasional basis (21.4% and 24.7% respectively).

Staff training

- There were high levels of completed traffic light training (93.1% canteen/food service supervisors and 80.9% employers) and FoodSafe training (98.9% canteen/food service supervisors and 80.2% canteen/food service volunteers).
- A greater proportion of metropolitan schools (96.2%) reported having canteen/food service supervisors who had completed traffic light training compared to regional schools (85.7%); this difference was statistically significant (p -value 0.0025).

Table 4: Proportion of schools meeting canteen/food service HFD Policy requirements, HFD School Principal Survey 2019

					Traffic light training completed		FoodSafe training completed	
	Menu has minimum of 60% green food and drinks	Menu has maximum of 40% amber food and drinks	Offer savoury commercial amber products no more than two days per week	Menu contains red food and drinks even on an occasional basis	Canteen/food service supervisor	Employer	Canteen/food service supervisor	Canteen/food service volunteers
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
All schools with a canteen/food service	260 (95.2%)	254 (95.1%)	226 (84.3%)	59 (22.3%)	241 (93.1%)	182 (80.9%)	259 (98.9%)	158 (80.2%)
School location								
Metropolitan schools with a canteen/food service	187 (95.9%)	182 (95.8%)	156 (83.4%)	40 (21.4%)	175 (96.2%)^a	128 (81.5%)	186 (99.5%)	115 (82.1%)
Regional schools with a canteen/food service	73 (93.6%)	72 (93.5%)	70 (86.4%)	19 (24.7%)	66 (85.7%)^a	54 (79.4%)	73 (97.3%)	43 (75.4%)
Type of school								
Primary schools with a canteen/food service	182 (97.3%)	177 (95.7%)	160 (85.1%)	28 (15.7%)^b	166 (93.3%)	130 (82.8%)	182 (98.9%)	108 (80.0%)
High schools * with a canteen/food service	65 (90.3%)	63 (92.6%)	57 (82.6%)	26 (36.1%)^b	62 (91.2%)	41 (74.5%)	65 (98.5%)	42 (79.2%)
Other schools ** with a canteen/food service	13 (92.9%)	14 (100%)	9 (81.8%)	5 (35.7%)	13 (100%)	11 (84.6%)	12 (100%)	8 (88.9%)

					Traffic light training completed		FoodSafe training completed	
	Menu has minimum of 60% green food and drinks (%)	Menu has maximum of 40% amber food and drinks (%)	Offer savoury commercial amber products no more than two days per week (%)	Menu contains red food and drinks even on an occasional basis (%)	Canteen/ food service supervisor (%)	Employer (%)	Canteen/ food service supervisor (%)	Canteen/ food service volunteers (%)
Secondary schools with a canteen/food service	53 (89.8%)	52 (92.9%)	43 (78.2%)	21 (36.8%)	54 (98.2%)	32 (53.3%)	55 (100%)	38 (84.4%)
District high school schools with a canteen/food service	12 (92.3%)	11 (91.7%)	14 (100%)	5 (33.3%)	8 (61.5%)	9 (60.0%)	10 (90.9%)	4 (50.0%)
Education support schools with a canteen/food service	11 (91.7%)	12 (100%)	7 (77.8%)	5 (41.7%)	11 (100%)	9 (64.3%)	11 (100%)	7 (87.5%)
K-12 school with a canteen/food service	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	2(100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)	1 (100%)	1 (100%)

a Statistically significant according to a Chi Squared Test or Fishers Exact Test (p<0.05) comparing metropolitan schools to regional schools; 'Unsure' responses were excluded from statistical comparisons; b Statistically significant according to a Chi Squared Test or Fishers Exact Test (p<0.05) comparing primary schools to high schools and other schools; 'Unsure' responses were excluded from statistical comparisons; * High schools includes secondary and district high schools, combined for Chi Squared test; ** Other schools includes schools identified as 'education support schools', 'specialists' schools' and 'K-12 schools', combined for Chi Squared test.

Activities conducted by schools to promote healthy eating (Table 5)

- The majority of schools utilised multiple strategies to promote healthy eating. Less than 2% of schools claimed that it was not a priority to promote healthy eating.
- The most popular strategy to promote healthy eating used by all schools, except secondary schools, was to 'run healthy eating programs such as *Crunch&Sip*[®] and school kitchen gardens' (80.2% of all schools). 80.3% of secondary schools 'worked with the school canteen to adopt the Health Promoting Schools framework' (in which health is integrated into the school curriculum as well as school policies, and which recognises the importance of links with health services and partnerships between the school, families and community). These results are consistent with 2018 survey results.
- Similar proportions of metropolitan and regional schools 'ran healthy programs such as *Crunch and Sip*[®] or a school kitchen garden' (79.4% and 81.7% respectively), 'organised whole school events such as health/nutrition campaign/event, theme days' (44.8% and 39.0% respectively), and 'conducted healthy P&C fundraising events' (45.1% and 43.9% respectively).
- 'Inviting qualified guest speakers to address students, parents and/or staff about healthy eating' was the strategy least used by schools (32% of all schools), consistent with 2018 survey results.

Table 5: Activities conducted by schools to promote healthy eating, HFD School Principal Survey 2019

Activity *	Total schools	Metropolitan	Regional	Primary school	Secondary school	District High school	Education Support school	K-12 schools	Specialist
	(%) n=450	(%) n=286	(%) n=164	(%) n=320	(%) n=66	(%) n=24	(%) n=36	(%) n=3	(%) n=1
Run healthy eating programs such as <i>Crunch and Sip</i> or a school kitchen garden	361 (80.22%)	227 (79.37%)	134 (81.71%)	292 (91.25%)	16 (24.24%)	22 (91.67%)	29 (80.56%)	2 (66.67%)	0 (0%)
Work with the school canteen to adopt the Health Promoting Schools framework	246 (54.67%)	168 (58.74%)	78 (47.56%)	166 (51.88%)	53 (80.30%)	14 (58.33%)	12 (33.33%)	1 (33.33%)	0 (%)
Include nutrition advice or information in the school newsletter at least once per term	202 (44.89%)	116 (40.56%)	86 (52.44%)	158 (49.38%)	14 (21.21%)	13 (54.17%)	15 (41.67%)	2 (66.67%)	0 (0%)
Organise whole school events such as a health/ nutrition campaign/ event, theme day etc.	192 (42.67%)	128 (44.76%)	64 (39.02%)	139 (43.44%)	28 (42.42%)	12 (50.0%)	13 (36.11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Conduct healthy P&C fundraising events	201 (44.67%)	129 (45.10%)	72 (43.90%)	163 (50.94%)	14 (21.21%)	11 (45.83%)	11 (30.56%)	2 (66.67%)	0 (0%)
Invite qualified guest speakers to address students, parents and/or staff about healthy eating	144 (32%)	72 (25.17%)	72 (43.90%)	101 (31.56%)	24 (36.36%)	12 (50.0%)	7 (19.44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Not a priority, do nothing specific	8 (1.78%)	6 (2.10%)	2 (1.22%)	3 (0.94%)	3 (4.55%)	1 (4.17%)	0 (0%)	1 (33.33%)	0 (0%)

* Multiple responses permitted therefore percentages will not add up to 100

Discussion

The HFD Policy aims to increase the capacity of WA public schools and key school stakeholders to establish, maintain and strengthen policies and practices that support the provision and promotion of healthy food and drinks in schools.

The results of the 2019 HFD School Principal Survey indicate that just over two-thirds (68.7%) of schools have a HFD Policy, around 17.3% are in the process of developing a Policy, and 11.1% of schools do not have a Policy. These findings are consistent with the survey results of the last three years.

School type

Primary schools (62.6%) were significantly more likely to meet all four traffic light policy criteria (defined as the canteen menu having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, no more than two days per week of savoury amber foods, and no red food or drinks), than high schools (secondary and district high schools) (46.7%).

When comparing high schools and primary schools, 25% of high schools, compared to 9.7% of primary schools meet all criteria except for not offering red food and drinks. High schools (36.1%) were significantly more likely to offer red food and drinks than primary schools (15.7%). This difference was also statistically significant in 2018 (35.3% of high schools compared to 20.2% of primary schools). This finding demonstrates that offering no red food and drinks on the menu is the most challenging criteria of the Policy for high schools, which is consistent with past years' survey results.

According to the WASCA, common barriers to implementing/complying with the HFD Policy identified by secondary schools include: concerns regarding profit/loss; time taken for new foods to gain interest (thus managing potential wastage); lack of volunteers; and secondary schools being less likely to colour code their canteen menu.³ In addition, food advertising near schools can impact students' lunch choices with students at some high schools and other schools being allowed to go off campus to purchase food, therefore the canteen is trying to compete with outside commercial businesses. This result demonstrates that high schools should continue

³ Western Australian School Canteen Association Inc (2019). Annual Report 2018-19, [Available from: <https://www.waschoolcanteens.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-WASCA-Annual-Report.pdf>]

to be supported to remove red food and drinks. Potential strategies to address this include:

- WASCA to continue to provide tailored training sessions for secondary schools only to ensure relevance of topics and networking opportunities
- WASCA to develop marketing messages, posters and fact sheets specifically focusing on red food and drinks, also reminding schools red items are 'off the menu'; WASCA to consider distribution pathways
- Advocating for a duty of care approach, encouraging Principals to restrict students leaving school grounds during school hours

Running 'healthy eating programs such as *Crunch&Sip*[®] and school kitchen gardens' was the most popular strategy used by all schools (80.2% of schools), except secondary schools. Of secondary schools, 80.3% reported 'working with the school canteen to adopt the Health Promoting Schools framework'. The reason for this may be due to limited number of healthy eating programs that are tailored for secondary students, as well as difficulty implementing these programs in typically a larger school setting. These results were also consistent with the 2018 survey.

School location

While the level of completed traffic light training is high, significantly more metropolitan schools reported having canteen/food service supervisors who had completed traffic light training compared to regional schools. This is consistent with the previous three years of survey results. These differences may be a consequence of fewer face-to-face training sessions being conducted by the WASCA in regional locations due to reduced funding since 2015. However, training is made available to regional schools online and via video conference, and the WASCA provide support via phone, email, website and Facebook. There may be opportunities to increase promotion of these training opportunities to regional schools to increase uptake. There were no other significant differences between metropolitan and regional schools.

2018-19 Achievements

The 2019 survey results reflect the support being provided to schools by the WASCA to encourage Policy compliance and implementation. Some specific examples of WASCA's activities and achievements in 2018-19 include (but are not limited to):

- 52 new tools and resources developed to support schools to implement the policy, including a new traffic light poster translated into 17 languages;
- 565 people completed training, including online (n=99) and face to face (n=466) during 33 training and capacity building sessions
- tailored support and advice provided to 228 schools; and
- the Action on Nutrition (AON) project (February – July 2019), which aimed to investigate barriers, enablers and support strategies for implementing the HFD Policy in secondary and regional schools. One of the key activities from AON was conducting menu assessments with regional and secondary schools; and implementing a new strategy conducting follow-up phone calls to schools that received a menu assessment. Findings showed schools removed red items and increased fruit and vegetables on the menu as a result of receiving the menu assessment. This is now standard protocol for WASCA.

In 2018- 2019, WASCA also provided advice and support to the DoE to inform a review of the HFD Policy, which is likely to be incorporated into the broader Student Health Care Policy in 2021. While the HFD Policy itself will remain unchanged, combining policies may strengthen the HFD Policy and reinforce a whole school approach to healthy eating, while promoting the link between nutrition and learning. If this change is made, it will be important to monitor its impact on compliance with the HFD Policy.

Limitations

Some limitations of this survey include:

- The response rate to this survey has declined since 2016, having dropped from 88.5% in 2016 to 50.1% in 2017, 57.3% in 2018 and 56.7% in 2019. This reduces the ability to generalise these findings to all schools across WA and may result in a selective sample of schools and overestimation of compliance. A strong response rate to this survey is critical for a reliable evaluation of the HFD Project.
- The survey relies on self-reported compliance, and there may be a substantial gap between self-reported and independent, objectively measured compliance.

Summary

Currently in WA, almost one quarter of children aged 5 to 15 years of age are overweight or obese. Schools are extremely well positioned to support healthy eating behaviours, and play a crucial role, as part of a comprehensive public health approach, in preventing childhood obesity. Canteen/food services are an integral part of the school environment and can assist in establishing children's healthy eating behaviours whilst at school and subsequently throughout adulthood.

The administration of the HFD School Principal Survey and dissemination of results is important to assist schools to remain focussed on HFD Policy compliance and implementation, encourage information sharing across jurisdictions and promote open and accountable reporting. In 2017, the Global Obesity Centre at Deakin University led an assessment of the extent to which governments in Australia are implementing globally recommended policies for tackling obesity and creating healthier food environments (the Food Policy Index). As part of this assessment, it was recommended that Western Australia improve awareness and compliance with the HFD Policy in all schools, by extending reporting mechanisms, incentives and support systems.

The HFD Policy and monitoring of the Policy through the HFD School Principal Survey, also support the national and Western Australian agendas for obesity prevention and is in alignment with the WA Health Promotion Strategic Framework

2017-2021, and the Sustainable Health Review's recommendation to halt the rise in obesity in WA by July 2024.

Overall, the 2019 survey results are encouraging, and compliance with the HFD Policy remains high. However, the results demonstrate the need for further improvement in the following areas:

- supporting all schools (and particularly high schools) to remove red food and drink items from canteens/food services;
- supporting high schools to meet the remaining policy criteria requirements that relate to the menu (canteen having at least 60% green foods, no more than 40% amber foods, and no more than 2 days per week of savoury commercial amber foods); and
- increasing the number of regional canteen/food service supervisors who complete traffic light training.

Continued monitoring of the HFD environment in schools is therefore essential to assist in addressing these areas of priority for the Department of Education and Department of Health.

Recommendations

1. The Department of Education continues to administer the annual HFD Policy implementation survey of public schools and invite the Department of Health to analyse the results.
2. The Department of Education continues to implement strategies designed to increase the response rate for future HFD School Principal Surveys (e.g. follow up reminder emails, ensure survey is open for appropriate amount of time, ensure links are working correctly, ensure respondents are aware of how long the survey will take to complete, ensure respondents are aware of the purpose and significance of the survey, etc). In addition, it is recommended that strategies are implemented to attract new schools to complete the survey in 2020.
3. The Department of Education and the WASCA continue to make the survey results publicly available (e.g. on the Department of Education HFD web page and the WASCA webpage) as was done in 2018.

4. Continuation of quarterly HFD Reference Group meetings to ensure the Department of Education, Department of Health and the WASCA are kept informed and updated on the status of the HFD Policy progress throughout the school year. In addition, the Reference Group continues to:
 - a. work with the WASCA to provide targeted support to high schools to meet HFD policy criteria, (particularly to remove red items from canteen menus), for example:
 - i. Tailored training sessions for secondary schools only to ensure relevance of topics and networking opportunities
 - ii. WASCA to develop marketing messages and fact sheets specifically focussing on red food and drinks; reminding schools red items are 'off the menu'; WASCA to consider distribution pathways
 - iii. Develop marketing materials (e.g. posters) suitable for high schools promoting healthy eating;
 - b. work with the WASCA to provide targeted support to all schools to increase traffic light training (particularly in regional schools); for example, WASCA to increase engagement with health professionals in regional WA to promote HFD policy compliance and support such as the traffic light training; including promoting training opportunities via social media pages (e.g. My Healthy Kimberley).
 - c. work with the WASCA to provide targeted support to all schools, i.e. those with and without canteens, to increase the number of schools with a written Policy for the provision of healthy food and drinks.

Appendix 1 - Traffic light categorisation examples provided by the WASCA

Department of Education's Healthy Food and Drink policy

What's on the menu



Green food and drinks	Amber food and drinks	Red food and drinks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cereal foods – wholegrain cereals, pasta, noodles, rice, cous cous, quinoa • A variety of bread types including wholegrain/ wholemeal • Vegetables and legumes e.g. stuffed potatoes, corn-on-cob, baked beans, 4 bean mix, garden salads, potato salad, coleslaw (using reduced fat dressings) • Fruit, fresh and frozen, whole, fruit salad, sliced fruit • Fruit canned in natural juice • A variety of sandwich/roll fillings, preferably served with salad e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - egg - reduced fat cheese - tuna, canned in spring water or brine - lean meats i.e. roast beef - yeast spreads - hummus • Lean meats, fish, poultry • Meals[#], especially those with vegetables e.g. pasta bake, curry and rice, frittata, soup, sushi, rice paper rolls • Reduced fat dairy products including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plain milk - flavoured milk (375mL or less) - cheese - plain and flavoured yoghurt • Plain water • Plain mineral water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savoury breads such as garlic, herb and pizza bases • Reduced fat pastry items[#] • Frankfurts and sausages for hot dogs and/or sausage sizzles[#] • Savoury commercial products, e.g. fish, chicken, potato portions, pizza[#] • Hamburger patties[#] • Processed meat e.g. ham, skin-free processed chicken • Assorted cakes/biscuits or muffins[#] • Sweet and savoury snack foods[#] • Plain dried fruit • Ice creams and icy poles[#] • Reduced fat flavoured milk (more than 375mL & less than 600mL) • High schools only: reduced fat coffee flavoured milk (375mL or less) • Full fat dairy products e.g. plain milk, yoghurt, cheese • Full fat flavoured milk (375mL or less) • 99% fruit juices (250mL or less) and no added sugar • Dairy desserts[#] e.g. reduced fat custard, ice cream and mousse (milk/milk alternative listed as first ingredient) <p><i>NOTE: Reduced fat dairy recommended for children over the age of 2 years</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-fat pastry items • Deep fried food • Sweet sandwich fillings e.g. jam, honey, confectionery sprinkles • High fat meats e.g. polony and salami • Confectionery e.g. chocolate, liquorice, cough lollies, jellies • Sweet or savoury snack items that do not meet the criteria e.g. potato chips • Soft drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks • Reduced fat flavoured milk (more than 600mL) • Reduced fat coffee flavoured milk drink (more than 375mL) • Full fat flavoured milk (more than 375mL) • Chocolate coated ice-creams • Jelly; fruit with jelly • Croissants, cream or iced buns/cakes, doughnuts, sweet pastries, slices • Fruit juice (more than 250mL) and/or with added sugar or sweetener • Water flavoured with fruit juice, sugar and/or sweetener



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