

## Changes to school food policy in WA

As the peak body representing school canteens in WA for 30 years, we continue to advocate for healthy food environments by providing nutrition and food service support and education, to empower communities.

We know from discussions with our members and other stakeholders that there is some confusion and concerns over the policy changes. It is our understanding from the Department of Education canteens should operate on a business as usual basis. WASCA supports initiatives and policy that encourages positive health outcomes for children. We also recognise that understanding the changes and implementing change will take time.

We have been inundated with questions about the changes to the healthy food and drink policy in schools. The following provides a brief overview of frequently asked questions and answers.

### Are these changes I keep hearing about WASCA “rules”?

No, changes to the traffic light colour coding of food and drink items in WA schools are part the Department of Education’s Student Health in Public Schools Procedures and Department of Health Nutrient Criteria.

### What is the new policy?

The Department of Education’s Student Health in Public Schools Procedures\* and Appendix B Healthy Food and Drink can be [viewed here](#). The changes to the policy include new nutrient criteria to categorise food and drinks as green, amber, red, and selected red. The colour coding of food and drinks is underpinned by the Department of Health [WA School Food and Drink Criteria](#).

*\* Previously known as the Healthy Food and Drink policy.*

### Do I have to make changes to my canteen menu now?

No. According to the Department of Education changes to the classification of menu items do not need to be implemented immediately, we support this advice. The Department has confirmed no items currently sold in school canteens have been banned under recent changes to the Department of Health’s WA school food and drink criteria. Canteens can transition to the new guidelines at a date that is suitable for their school. We strongly recommend you discuss this with your Principal and make a plan in consultation with your school community.

Until such time as you review your menu please refer to the Star Choice™ Buyer’s Guide, as a menu planning tool.

## Why did I hear about these changes for the first time in The West/on the news?

There has been a lot of coverage about the changes over the past few days (11-12 February 2024). The Department of Education sent out communications on the 15 December 2023 to principals. WASCA quickly followed with an e-news sent direct to members\*. In January 2024, we shared details on our Facebook page.

*\*In addition to a range of exclusive benefits, members receive regular communication direct to their inbox. If your school isn't a member and want to know more click [here](#)*

## Who can I ask for more information about the policy?

Policy related questions regarding Healthy Food and Drink Appendix B should be directed to the Student Engagement and Wellbeing branch at [StudentEngagementandWellbeing.Admin@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:StudentEngagementandWellbeing.Admin@education.wa.edu.au), call 61 89402 6432 or your Principal can lodge a 'Request for Assistance' (RAF) via IKON.

## Is ham red and can I sell it?

Yes, you can still sell ham. According to the new Department of Health - [WA School Food and Drink Criteria](#) Ham has been reclassified as a 'selected red' item. You can offer ham on the menu two days per week. To have your menu assessed based on this, contact [FreshSNAP](#).

## What is a selected red item?

Please see the factsheet on the [Department of Health website here](#).

## What about other foods that are now reclassified as red?

According to the Department of Education, where an amber item has been reclassified as a red item it may be included on the menu in your 'amber' count. These items may only be offered two days a week. This cannot be applied retrospectively. Once a 'red' item has been removed from a menu, it cannot be re-introduced. To have your menu assessed based on this, contact [FreshSNAP](#).

## What can WASCA help me with?

WASCA continues to support school canteens from a holistic point of view. For example:

- Advisory service – keep talking to us. Call the office or send us an email, we are here to help your school with support and advice where possible, and if you have a good news story we would love to hear about that too and help spread the word
- Use the [Star Choice™ Buyer's Guide](#) to for products, equipment, packaging, and fundraising
- Use the [menu review guide](#) to self-assess your menu, remember to offer at least 60% green choices
- Access [100's of recipes](#) via the website, many of which have come direct from school canteens
- Regularly review menu prices to ensure you are covering costs. Attend our [CORE finances training](#); members can access a range of templates for recipe costing and analysing incoming and expenses
- [Recruit, retain and reward volunteers](#); members can access the Volunteer Welcome kit for advice
- Comply with food safety and hygiene legislation and DOE policy by completing:
  - o Food Safety Supervisor training (WASCA members receive a discount); full day training plus range of templates to comply with record keeping requirements,
  - o FoodSafe Food Handler training (free access for WASCA members)
- Consider ways schools and school canteens can address [sustainability](#).