

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



SWEET DRINK POLICY



Health Promoting School

Ministry of Education, October 2014

SWEET DRINK POLICY

Forward

Vanuatu, as a young nation, needs to learn to live a good and healthy lifestyle to reduce the alarming rise of non-communicable diseases in our communities particularly in urban and semi-urban areas. And this can be achieved by providing health skills to almost half of the population of this country that is currently in schools with a very high anticipation that school children will influence their parents and communities to change their lifestyles for a better healthy future.

The Sweet Drink Policy has been prepared under the guidance of the Ministry of Education assisted by a qualified nutritionist, Ms Tarli O Connell from the World Vision and the Interim National Health Promoting School Committee composed of Health and Education Officers.

This policy is intended to be implemented by every school in Vanuatu from ECCE to tertiary level to support the Health Promoting School program to improve not only the school health but also to improve the health of the communities, Islands, provinces and the nation of Vanuatu.

This policy will be a start of a series of school health policies to prepare young Ni Vanuatu and future generation for life.

As the Minister responsible for Education and Training, I would like to acknowledge:

1. The continuous working relationship and partnership of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health through the Health Promoting School program and activities to improve school health in Vanuatu.
2. The leading role of the Ministry of Education through the Division of Education Services in the implementation of the Health Promoting School Program
3. The officers who have working collaboratively to develop this Sweet Drink Policy:
 - a. The Health Promoting School National Coordinator Pierre Gambetta who guide the development of this policy,
 - b. The World Vision Qualified Nutritionist Ms Tarli O'connel for her technical assistance in the development of this policy
 - c. The Interim National Health Promoting School Committee members for their time to progressively review the final draft of this policy
 - Joseph Elmo, provincial Education Officer for Shefa
 - Joe Kalotap, Coordinator for Shefa Zone Curriculum Advisory Service
 - Meriam Abel, WHO Representative
 - Jean Jacques Health Promotion Officer
 - Paul Alexander Hetyey, Principal Central School
 - Charley Pakoa, Deputy Principal, Freshwater school
 - Glenden Ilaissa, National Education Program

- Junko Saito, JOCV

I look forward to the progressive implementation of this policy in a collaborative manner in our schools and its enforcement by the Provincial Education Officers, Education Authorities, School Improvement Officers, Zone Curriculum Advisers and Health Inspectors



Honourable Bob Loughman



Minister of Education and training

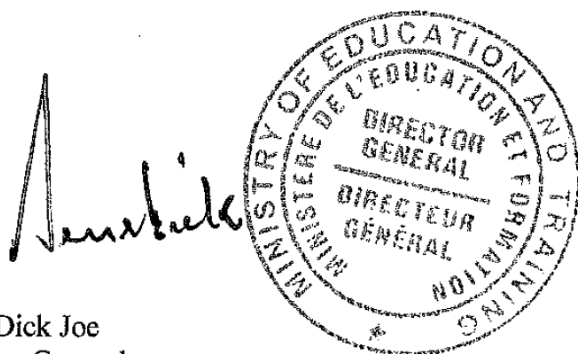
Introduction

There is substantial evidence which indicates that the health of children and young people is a major factor affecting their capacity to learn. Similarly the level of an individual's education influences their health. The Government of Vanuatu has a responsibility to ensure that the conditions for schooling are the best they can be. This can be achieved through establishing Health Promoting Schools which are a means of organizing and linking all the crucial components which shape the health of children and young people.

The Sweet Drink Policy is introduced in schools and kindergartens in Vanuatu as part of the Vanuatu Health Promoting School Program and relates to the following codes:

- The Minimum Quality Standards for Primary School No 2.9 states that School health policies are to be developed and implemented to protect school staff and students. Both teachers and students need to be protected from harm in school.
- The regulation order No 44 of 2005 stipulates the health and safety requirements in schools as follows:
 - 1) The principal of a school is to ensure that the school has in place a safe and healthy environment for learning.
 - 2) For the purpose of paragraph 15 (e) of the Act, the prescribed health and safety requirements are those set out in:
 - a. The Vanuatu Guidelines for Health Promoting Schools, as amended from time to time; and
 - b. The hand book for secondary school principals, as amended from time to time; and
 - c. The hand book for primary school Heads Teachers, as amended from time to time.

The purpose of the Policy is to eliminate the consumption of sweet drinks on school and kindergarten grounds and to develop children's necessary health skills to allow them to be more responsible for their health and in future to maintain a healthy Vanuatu.



Jesse Dick Joe
Director General
Department of Education and Training

1. Guiding Principles

- The education and health sectors will work together to improve the health of school children in Vanuatu. The development of Health Promoting Schools requires strong collaboration at national, provincial, school and community levels.
- With the alarming increase of non-communicable disease in Vanuatu, we will strive to provide health skills to our children and this will be done at school level.
- School children will be equipped with health knowledge and skills to better prepare for their future.
- Schools will uphold a healthy environment by eliminating consumption of unhealthy foods and drinks which have no nutritional value for the development of a child.
- Schools will promote positive health behaviours including the consumption of healthy foods and drinks, and promotion of water drinking will remain one of the essential elements of health in schools.

2. Purpose (Rationale)

In Vanuatu, the rate of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is increasing rapidly. The prevalence of diabetes rose from 3% in 1998 to 22% in 2011¹. In 2011, 51% of people were overweight, of which 19% were obese¹. This high and growing rate of NCDs is a significant burden to Vanuatu's health system and socio-economic development². Each diabetic requiring insulin therapy costs the government 29,784V per year³.

The high consumption of sweet drinks is established as a leading cause for NCDs such as type 2 diabetes⁴. The link between sweet drink consumption and weight gain is stronger than for any other food or drink item⁵. Sweet drinks are also associated with tooth decay⁶.

The strong association between sweet drink consumption and these health conditions is due to the large amount of sugar and related sweeteners that sweet drinks contain. The World Health Organization propose that to maintain good health people consume no more than 6 teaspoons or 25 grams of sugar per day⁷. A 330mL can of Coca Cola contains 9 teaspoons of sugar; a 250mL carton of Golden Circle Tropical Punch Fruit Drink contains 7 teaspoons of sugar; and a 250mL carton of Breaka Chocolate Milk contains 7 teaspoons of sugar. Sugar consumed in this way provides a large amount of calories without the consequential feeling of fullness⁸. In addition, these drinks have little nutritional value. The same is true for juice⁹. A 250mL cup of 100% fruit juice contains 7 teaspoons of sugar, while fibre and many other nutrients are retained in the fruit's skin and flesh.

The consumption of sweet drinks has risen rapidly in Vanuatu, comparable to the increase in NCDs. The import of soft drink increased 178% between 2006 and 2012 to 1.9million litres¹⁰. The consumption of sweet drinks by young people is of particular concern; in 2011, 38% of students aged 13 – 15 reported drinking one or more cans of soft drink per day¹¹.

In their recommendations for addressing NCDs in the Pacific, the World Bank advise for Ministries of Education to 'ban sugar sweetened beverages' with education settings a place

where sweet drinks are regularly consumed and where life-long behaviours are learnt¹². This is reiterated by the World Health Organisation¹³, and the World Cancer Research Fund¹⁴.

By enforcing a policy that prohibits sweet drink consumption in learning environment such as kindergartens and schools, the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Education Boards and Education Authorities throughout the country can reduce sweet drink consumption and contribute to improve the health and education of children and socio-economic outcomes for Vanuatu.

3. Vision

Our vision is to improve the health of students, school personnel, families and other members of the community through schools settings and to prepare children for life through the establishment of a Health Promoting School Program so that they maintain a healthy life and contribute effectively to the nation's socio-economic development.

4. Mission (Goal)

Our mission is for schools in Vanuatu to be Health Promoting Schools. This will be achieved by supporting teachers, head teachers, principals, school committees, school councils and communities to:

- Develop their schools into better physical and social environments.
- Define clearly their schools' health policies.
- Promote their communities' relationship and participation to school life.
- Develop their children's necessary health skills to allow them to be more responsible for their health and in future to maintain a healthy Vanuatu.

5. Objectives

1. To reduce the risk of harm associated with the consumption of sweet drinks by children in Vanuatu.
2. To present a message to the community that the consumption of sweet drinks is an unhealthy behaviour.
3. To provide leadership to the community in reducing the consumption of sweet drinks, promoting good nutrition, and providing a healthy environment.

6. Definitions

- *Sweet drinks* are defined in this policy as drinks which contain sugar, sweetener or flavouring and have low nutritional value. This includes carbonated or 'fizzy' drinks, cordials, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, fruit juices, sugarcane juice, flavoured milks and drinks with added sugar.
- *Health Promoting School* refers to a school health program initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 1995, the Pacific Ministers of Health made the Yanuca Island

Declaration, being for Health Promoting Schools to be a setting for health development within the Healthy Islands in the Pacific initiative.

7. Education System

The Health Promoting School Program is to be implemented at all levels of the education system and structure:

- Pre-school education and early childhood centres
- Primary education and schools
- Secondary education and colleges
- Technical and vocational Education and schools
- Tertiary Education and institution

8. Strategies and Procedures

1. Sweet drinks are prohibited at schools and kindergartens throughout Vanuatu. This includes:
 - a) drinks sold at schools and kindergartens
 - b) drinks provided for free at schools and kindergartens (e.g. class party, fundraiser)
 - c) drinks brought to schools and kindergartens by students, their family, staff or the community.
2. Unflavoured water, fresh coconut water and unflavoured milk are allowed, encouraged and promoted at schools and kindergartens, not prohibited by the Sweet Drinks Policy. These drinks are high in nutritional value.
3. Staff and those that live on school grounds (e.g. boarding school students) are also permitted to consume hot water with milk, tea, leaves and coffee. Staff and students are to limit or avoid adding sugar to these beverages.
4. The enforcement of the Sweet Drinks Policy will be the responsibility of school and kindergarten staff. This is as per the Ministry of Education Head Teachers Manual, whereby staff members are responsible for students' health. Each school is required to identify rules for enforcing the policy internally (e.g. school staff is to confiscate prohibited drinks).
5. The monitoring and enforcement of a school or kindergarten's compliance with the Sweet Drinks Policy will be the responsibility of staff of the Ministry of Education, each Provincial Education Office, Zone Curriculum Advisors, and School Improvement Officers who are required to:
 - 5.1. Ensure that school and kindergarten staff members are informed of the Policy and their responsibility to enforce it through communication and awareness raising.
 - 5.2. Ensure that all Principals have internal rules for enforcing the Policy.

- 5.3. On visits to schools and kindergartens, observe compliance (e.g. Are sweet drinks being consumed here?).
 - 5.4. If non-compliance is observed, provide the Principal with a warning letter or email which includes a reminder of the Policy.
 - 5.5. If non-compliance is observed following the warning, report the school or kindergarten to the Ministry of Education's School Health Officer who will take further, considered action.
6. ICT materials developed for communicating the policy are to be distributed or displayed appropriately to inform school and kindergarten staff, food service providers, students, their families and the school and kindergarten community of the components and rationale for the Sweet Drinks Policy.

9. Conclusion

The Ministry of Education is making progress to providing more direction on school health. The Sweet Drinks Policy will support the Healthy Vanuatu School Food Guidelines launched in 2013 and the instruction from Education Services to schools to be healthier institutions.

This policy is a beginning for other school health policies to be developed in near future. Enforcement of the Sweet Drinks Policy will commence in Shefa Province then expand to other provinces.

10. Effective date

This Policy is effective from the first day of the Term 1, 2015.

11. Date of Re view

The Policy will be reviewed in September annually.

The review will consider the Policy's effectiveness in reducing the consumption of sweet drinks in schools and kindergartens, and be informed by observations, feedback and provincial sales figures.

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