



# Creating a Pleasant and Safe Eating Environment

To improve your school's eating environment, take a look at its decoration, noise level, lighting and setting. To enjoy meals, students need to be in a pleasant environment and to feel safe. Here is a list of ideas to consider.

## Decoration

- Decorate the eating area for special events and seasonal occasions.
- Place student artwork on the walls.
- Use colourful paint/wallpaper.
- Provide placemats.
- Place decorative magnets on cooler doors.
- Place flowers/green plants (fresh or plastic) in the room.
- Use theme napkins.
- Organize a creative "decorate your eating area" contest.

## Noise level

Eating areas don't have to be as quiet as a library, but should not be terribly noisy. To keep the noise level down:

- Remind students that eating areas are to be safe, caring and orderly places.
- Use acoustic ceilings.
- Consider playing calming music.
- Play seasonal songs.

## Lighting

- Use bright lights in the eating area.



## Setting

- Ensure there is adequate space to eat lunch.
- Allow convenient access to hand washing and oral hygiene.
- Provide access to safe drinking water.
- Clean the eating room and tables regularly (before and after lunch).
- Provide paper towels to clean up.
- Use round tables to encourage socializing.

## Safety

- Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.  
<http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile85.pdf>
- Train staff in personal hygiene and customer service, and encourage staff to be friendly.
- Train those supervising snacks and lunchtime how to help someone who is choking.
- Provide safe drinking water.
- Establish rules for safe behaviours during meals such as no running and no throwing food or utensils.