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Effective Date: September 27, 2024

## **Pacific Montessori Society Feeding Futures Policy**

### **Background**

In Budget 2023, the B.C. Government invested \$214 million over three years for B.C. districts and schools, including \$12.2 million for independent schools, to create or expand local food programs to support students experiencing food insecurity. \$4.5 million was distributed to eligible Group 1, 2, and 3 independent schools in the 2023/24 School Year and \$4.5 million is being made available in the 2024/25 school year.

To support Feeding Futures School Food Programs administration, the Ministry of Education and Childcare partnered with the Federation of Independent School Associations in British Columbia to provide administrative support and to provide advice and expertise to independent schools.

The Ministry of Education has established parameters for how Feeding Futures funding can be allocated. These include through food procurement or production, through staffing for a school food program, through other spending on items such as appliances or equipment to prepare food, or through gift cards to local grocery stores provided directly to families in need.

### **Policy statement**

School food programs play an important role in providing students with stigma-free access to healthy, local food. Nourishing students at school not only helps them achieve better learning outcomes but also furthers connection with their school, peers, and community.

Selkirk Montessori school allocates its Feeding Futures funding through local grocery gift cards for families on a request basis. Using gift cards allows for a more targeted approach to reach those most in need.

This policy is intended to ensure financial accountability among school staff and non-stigmatizing allocation or distribution of funds.

### **Policy**

Selkirk Montessori School makes gift cards available in \$50 increments for any school families who indicate a need. The total amount provided is based on what is available, the number of requests, and family size.

The gift cards are provided in a sealed envelope with no reference to what is inside. The gift cards are distributed around the holiday time in December, with the school community being notified by the Head of School via email that people may request this support by completing a short, confidential survey.

### **Eligibility**

This funding is intended for families with students currently enrolled in the school at risk of food insecurity, including staff with children enrolled at the school.

For staff members whose children have moved into high school, their school will have received a similar grant, so they are encouraged to reach out to their child's school for similar support.