

Should schools ban the sale of junk food?

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The obesity rate in Hong Kong is alarming as it has been rising continuously, with data as of early 2026 indicating that over 50% of the adult population is considered overweight while the latest data for secondary students remains at a high 20%. This brings up a controversial question among people — should schools ban junk food? While some may agree with the ban due to such concerns, I believe they shouldn't for a few reasons.

Many students come from humble backgrounds. Their parents or caretakers may have insufficient money, resources, or time to provide full healthy meals for their children. Statistics show that 1 in 10 students comes from low-income families in Hong Kong. Hence, the most they can rely on is the cheap junk food the canteen provides, since it is within their budget. As a result, banning it would leave them with only two options – either starving or buying the pricier healthy option, which might just put them in a harder situation. Thus, it's safe to say, neither is a good option.

Banning of the sale of junk food won't just affect the students, but will also affect the school. A significant portion of their revenue comes from junk food. Thus, banning it will lead to huge declines in revenue. Inevitably, this will cut funds for things like extracurricular activities, which illustrates why this ban is impractical.

On the other hand, some may think that banning the sale of junk food would ultimately stop students from eating it. However, that is obviously not true at all. Junk food is easily accessible anywhere nowadays. It is in convenience stores, vending machines and major fast-food branches like KFC or McDonald's. Therefore, they can easily get it anywhere and anytime they like, which defeats the earlier argument as it does not necessarily stop students from eating it altogether.

In conclusion, while this ban may seem beneficial to maintain a healthy lifestyle for students, there are many other smaller things to take note of which are also key factors. That is why I don't agree with banning of sale of junk food in schools. If this is such a huge issue for some, it's important they know there are better ways to tackle this problem. Instead of implementing a ban that strips away choices, I urge school boards to prioritise the education on healthy and nutritional eating. In other words, 'teach, don't ban.'