

Rationale

A healthy lifestyle is vital to good health at all stages of life but especially in childhood. It is during childhood, particularly in the primary school years, that children develop lifestyle habits that can last a lifetime. It is also at this stage that major growth and development occurs, to which nutrition and a well-balanced diet is fundamental.

Concern has mounted recently in Australia over the poor food choices and eating habits of children and adolescents. Research statistics widely reported in the media have raised alarm over the growing obesity problem of the Australian population and in particular children and young people. St Mary's Catholic Primary School endeavours to provide an environment that will have a positive impact on nutritional health and promote a healthy lifestyle in our students, staff and parents.

Health risks of overweight and obese children include:

- Increased risk of heart disease;
- Diabetes;
- ill health and early death.

Learning and behaviour risks of overweight and obese children include:

- lower self-esteem especially teenage girls,
- anxiety and depression;
- social discrimination;
- higher level of physical discomfort (eg heat intolerance, heat rashes, breathlessness on exertion & aches and pains);
- deterioration of general health.

Aims of a Healthy Eating Policy

This Policy aims to promote a healthy lifestyle and provide a learning environment that will have a positive impact on the nutritional health and wellbeing of the students, staff and parents.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School promotes:

- positive attitudes towards healthy food choices;
- lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of obesity, tooth decay and the number of related diseases;
- personal responsibility for decision making about healthy eating.

Objectives

This policy is informed by the *NT School Canteen Guidelines 2006* and the *NT Government Canteen, Nutrition and Health Eating Policy 2013* which recommend daily availability of healthy foods which are low in fat, salt and sugar, high in fibre and with limitations on the quantity and frequency of less healthy options. These are known as "Everyday Foods" or "Green foods" and "Sometimes foods" or "Amber foods" as opposed to "Red Foods".

Therefore:

- Children are encouraged and given an opportunity each school day to have “Fruit Breaks” and eat fruit and vegetables during this time;
- Children are encouraged to have a water bottle accessible allowing them to drink water throughout the day;
- Parents are encouraged to provide ‘Litter Free’ or ‘nude’ food.
- Healthy treats provided at school will comply with Healthy Eating Guidelines with the intention of eliminating extrinsic food incentives (ie. no lollies as rewards)
- Our school is a “Nut Free” school and parents are requested not to send food to school containing nuts.
- Students will receive explicit teaching about healthy food and nutrition as part of the health curriculum;
- Parents will be encouraged to provide healthy food and cool foods wherever possible (ie. Ice packs)
- All food cooked at school as part of class programmes will comply with Healthy Eating Guidelines. (ie. ‘Sometimes food’ only 2 x per term)
- All food at class parties will reflect a balance of everyday and ‘Sometimes’ foods.
- All food consumed on camps and on excursions will comply with the Healthy Eating Guidelines, reflecting a balance of everyday and sometimes foods.
- The Canteen menu will comply with *NT School Canteen Guidelines 2006 policy*

Guidelines

- Supervised lunch eating time is provided for 10 minutes daily in a social environment;
- Staff will model positive food choices and not have soft drinks and lollies in class
- The school will adhere to the Food Safety Acts
- Children's medical needs will be supported
- Regular support will be provided to families through education about healthy food choices;
- The community will be involved in promoting good nutrition
- Any outside sponsorship/ organisation will comply with DECS Healthy Eating Guidelines, and
- Our school will be a breast feeding friendly environment

Therefore at St Mary's Catholic Primary School:

- soft drinks are not to be consumed by students while at school
- consumption of lollies and ‘red foods’ by students are discouraged
- foods high in fat, salt and sugar are discouraged
- foods low in sugar, salt, fat, unprocessed and minimally processed foods are encouraged (eg fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grain bread, cheese, yoghurt,
- Birthdays will be celebrated without ‘red foods’ or foods high in fat, salt and sugar e.g no lolly bags. Cakes are acceptable.

When enrolling a child, parents will be:

- Informed of the Healthy Eating Policy
- Encouraged to send their child to school with fresh fruit and vegetables and a bottle of water each day
- Advised of our 'nut free' policy
- Encouraged not to send their child with chips, sweet biscuits and other "sometimes foods" on a daily basis and not to send food containing nuts to school.

Other relevant guidelines and policies include:

1. *NT School Canteen Guidelines 2006 and the*
2. *NT Government Canteen, Nutrition and Health Eating Policy 2013*
3. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013 available at hmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/n55

REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed by the School Board in consultation with school staff, every 3 years.

Review History:

| Year of review | Reviewed by | Amendments/Reviews |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| June 2015 | Board | ratified |

Next review:

| Year of review | Committee responsible |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 2018 | Staff |