

St Louis de Montfort's Aspendale

HEALTHY EATING POLICY

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.

Fruit and vegetables are crucial components of a healthy diet. They contain beneficial phytochemicals that "fight" to protect health. They are packed full of beneficial vitamins, minerals and fibre. Different fruits and veggies have different nutrients, so it is important to eat a wide variety of these foods. Because they are low in calories and packed full of goodness, fruits and veggies are the ideal snack food for children. Most of us need to double the amount the amount of fruits and vegetables we eat every day. Worryingly, most children do not eat nearly enough fruits and vegetables for good health.

Many serious illnesses take a lifetime to develop. For example, heart disease begins in childhood, and many cancers result from habits developed in childhood. Regular fruit and veg consumption can help protect children from heart disease, some cancers, stroke, type II diabetes and obesity.

The body also needs a regular supply of water as water that is lost through breathing, sweating and going to the toilet needs to be replaced. This is especially important in hot weather. Adequate fluid intake is essential to good health. Inadequate intake of fluid causes dehydration and any level of dehydration can affect a child's ability to concentrate and may cause headaches.

Aims

- To develop within students an informed appreciation of healthy eating habits.
- To ensure that any foods provided by the school are consistent with a healthy eating philosophy.

Implementation:

- Parents will be encouraged to pack a healthy lunch for their children each day which includes fruit and vegetables, and where possible 'Litter Free'.
- Students will be encouraged to eat fruit and vegetables during a mid morning break each school day
- Students will be encouraged to have a water bottle accessible allowing them to drink water throughout the day
- Students will be encouraged to take their water bottle to Phys Ed and sport classes, excursions and camps
- Supervised morning recess and lunch eating time will be provided for 10 minutes daily in a social environment where children are seated
- Students will receive explicit teaching about healthy food and nutrition as part of the health curriculum
- Students with severe food allergies must only eat food that has been prepared at home or provided by the parent. These students are discouraged from purchasing items from the school canteen.
- There is to be no trading and sharing of food, food utensils and food containers.

- Students will be encouraged to wash their hands after eating.
- Bottles, other drinks and lunch boxes provided by the parents for their children must be clearly labeled with the name of the child for whom they are intended.
- Parents are encouraged to support the school's risk minimisation approach to "food allergies" by refraining from sending foods that contain peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. hazelnuts, cashews, almonds), egg, cow's milk, wheat, soybean, fish and shellfish to school, where a child in a particular class has an anaphylactic reaction to any of these food allergens.
- Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating habits whilst at school
- Confectionery and high sugar drinks such as soft drinks, energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters are excluded from the canteen and other school food services.
- Chips (crisps) and fried foods are supplied no more than two times per term through the canteen or other school food services.
- Fast foods such as McDonald's and KFC may not be eaten at school.
- Fundraising activities and classroom rewards will not focus on the promotion of unhealthy foods that do not complement a healthy eating philosophy eg: chocolate bars, lamingtons, fish and chips, donuts, etc.

Role of Parents and Carers:

Parents and carers play an important role in ensuring children eat well and stay active. It is expected that students will arrive at school having eaten an appropriate and healthy breakfast.

Parents and carers are asked to provide students with healthy and nutritious food options to eat at school and ensure children have a water bottle filled with water only, for use in the classroom each day.

Parents will also need to provide their children with an extra piece of fruit (or veg) to eat in the classroom. Always wash fruit or vegetables at home before you send them. For younger children send cut up fruit in a plastic tub, or smaller whole fruits. Please don't send processed "fruit" snacks like fruit winders...these are calorie laden and don't have the goodness of proper fruit.

Fruit break ideas include:

- fresh fruit and vegetables (eg: whole fruits, fruit salad, chopped melon, celery or carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes)
- fresh mushrooms
- dried fruit (eg: apricots, prunes, raisins and sultanas)

School lunch ideas include:

- sandwiches or pita bread with cheese, lean meat, or salad
- cheese slices, crackers with spread
- frozen water or milk, particularly in hot weather

Foods to limit in school lunches include:

- processed meats such as salami and pressed chicken
- chips, sweet biscuits, muesli bars and breakfast bars
- fruit bars and fruit straps
- cordials, juices containing sugar, and soft drinks

Policy formulated in November 2007 and last updated April 2011