

Policy Document No: ELC 35
Category: Early Learning and Primary
Topic: **Healthy Eating Policy**



Date of issue: December 2016

Purpose of the Policy

This Healthy Eating policy recognises the importance of good nutrition and the role it plays in the maintenance of good health and wellbeing.

Its aim is to:

- recognise that good nutrition underpins a healthy lifestyle,
- create a supportive environment for healthy food choices,
- teach children about food and healthy eating,
- provide a nutritious and varied menu for children,
- encourage the school community to provide healthy food and drink choices, and
- communicate with the school community about healthy eating.

Rationale/Background

Healthy eating and good nutrition have a major influence on children's health and wellbeing and a direct impact on their growth and development. It is important to provide access to and establish good healthy eating practices at a young age, as most children have formed lifelong habits by school age. The important social and cultural role of food, and the wide range of attitudes to it, is acknowledged within the service.

The educators, staff and management acknowledge the importance of healthy eating behaviours, which contribute to good health and overall wellbeing:

- healthy eating has a major influence on children's health and wellbeing,
- healthy eating habits are developed in the early years and are carried through to adulthood, and
- the *National Quality Standard* requires centres to provide healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guideline*.

Legislation

References have been made to the following legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard – quality area 2, 2011
- Australian Dietary Guidelines. National Health and Medical Research Council, 2013
- Belonging, Being and Becoming
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Commonwealth of Australia, 2009
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework For all Children from Birth to Eight Years. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2009

Definitions

Healthy eating: Healthy eating is eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- Fruit,
- vegetables and legumes/beans,
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain,
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, and
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, seeds and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially, culturally and developmentally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.

Source: Nutrition Australia Victorian Division <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org>, [healthy eating pyramid, 18/5/2015](#).

Nutrition: the process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.

Source: Oxford Dictionaries <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nutrition>.

Everyday and Sometimes Food

Everyday Food:

Typical foods found in this category are whole foods such as fresh fruit, wholegrain breads and cereals, lean cuts of meat, legumes and dairy products.

Sometimes Food is:

Foods and drinks that are categorised **sometimes**, are typically higher in sugar, saturated fat, and salt.

Source: Healthy Eating Advisory Service <http://heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au>

Hechsher: Is the [certification marking](#) on individual retail packaging of items which have been certified as Kosher.

The Policy

The policy will guide the procedures related to food and nutrition.

- The policy was developed in 2015 by a number of stakeholders including campus coordinators, Parents' Association, educators, food service staff, families and health professionals.
- The policy can be accessed via the school website.
- The policy will be included in the staff orientation and will be made mention of at parent orientation evenings.

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Healthy Eating Policy Committee.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide our policy:

1. **Kashrut Matters:** All food provided to the children is kosher. Food prepared on the premises is made in the kosher kitchens or supplied through kosher caterers. No food should be supplied to a child that is prepared in a home kitchen.
2. **Culture matters:** At Mount Scopus Memorial College we recognise the importance that food plays in our culture and traditions.

3. **Portion size matters:** The portion size of food offered to children will be considered, taking the child's age into account.
4. **Ingredients matter:** Fresh, whole foods and unprocessed ingredients will be our preferred choice.
5. **Recipes matter:** Recipes that are low in sugar, saturated fat and salt will be selected.
6. **Frequency matters:** "Sometimes Food" will be kept to a minimum.
7. **Education matters:** Children and adults will be educated about food so that they can make healthy choices.
8. **Allergies Matter:** Mount Scopus Memorial College Kindergarten and Primary School are NUT free so all items served or provided at school must comply with the nut free policy. We will endeavour to cater for other dietary requirements where possible.

Mealtime and the eating environment

At Mount Scopus Memorial College we will provide a health promoting, positive, safe and social eating environment through:

- providing positive encouragement to children eating healthy food and drinks,
- promoting positive discussion about the foods and drinks being served, and
- promoting a positive, relaxed, social eating environment with children.

Food and drink will not be used as an incentive or reward at any time.

Healthy body image and an enjoyment of eating are encouraged by the service.

Mealtimes are seen as an opportunity for social learning and for teaching children about appropriate mealtime behaviours.

Food regularly supplied by the College

Kindergarten

- Fresh fruit and vegetables are cut daily and served for morning tea.
- Safe drinking water is available and is accessible to all children. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly. Tap water or plain milk is provided to children at morning tea.
- Educators will be mindful of the ingredients, frequency and portion size when cooking with children for educational purposes.
- Parents will be encouraged to provide healthy food options for their children.

Aftercare and school holiday program

- Fresh fruit and sandwiches will be provided for the children daily at aftercare.
- Safe drinking water is available and is accessible to all children. Children are encouraged to drink water regularly.
- Educators will be mindful of the ingredients, frequency and portion size when cooking with children for educational purposes.

Tuckshop (Gandel Besen House and Fink Karp Ivany)

- All food items and recipes of products provided at tuckshop will be approved by a registered dietician.
- Sometimes Food will be offered at tuckshop and children will be educated in this regard.

Lunch order (Gandel Besen House and Fink Karp Ivany)

- All food items and recipes provided at tuckshop will be approved by a registered dietician.
- Food provided at lunch order will be Everyday Food.

Lunch order (Burwood)

- Parents have the choice to select healthy options from the online menu for their children.

Cultural Food

On Birthdays:

At Kindergarten:

- Birthdays will be celebrated with a simple cake made at kinder. This will not include added artificial colouring or icing and will take into account the allergies children may have in the kinder room.

At Primary School (Prep-Year 6):

- Children can bring in either kosher Icy-Poles or Freddo Frogs to celebrate their birthdays with the class. Children with allergies need to supply their own treat.

On Chagim:

- Children are encouraged to taste a wide variety of foods with a range of flavours, colours, textures and aromas through food experiences.
- Celebration food can be enjoyed without guilt.
- A yearly calendar of food supplied at chagim will be developed at the beginning of the school year. Food supplied to children will be made available to parents via the school newsletter.

At end of year class parties:

- Food supplied by children at the end of year parties must be kosher (with a hechsher, purchased from a kosher caterer or a product on the Kosher Australia list) and ingredients must be labelled for allergy reasons. No products containing nuts can be provided.
- We recognise that most of these foods are of minimal nutritional value and are not regularly supplied to children at school.

No soft Drinks will be provided to children at school.

No food will be offered to children as an incentive or reward

Learning about Food and Nutrition

- Educators involve children in healthy food experiences through growing and cooking, where appropriate.
- Opportunities to learn about food and healthy eating are embedded in the educational program.
- We recognise that educating children about allergies is important.

Food and Drinks brought from home

- Children will be encouraged to bring healthy food to eat for lunch and recess.
- In kindergarten, parents will be encouraged not to provide confectionary in children's lunchboxes.
- Children should bring either a milk or meat lunch and snack with no combinations of meat and milk products.
- Allergies: The Primary School and Kindergarten are all nut free zones due to severe allergies of some children. On the occasion when a child in the class has an allergy to a certain product, e.g. sesame, parents of that class will be informed and asked not to send that product in their child's lunchbox.

Food and drinks provided at home celebrations

- Our College has an inclusive policy and our students come from varied backgrounds. Parents will be encouraged to respect the religious standards of the many students who do keep Kosher when planning birthday parties and s'machot. Hosting a party or function that doesn't cater to those students who keep Kosher may send a message that they are not welcome.
- The Principal, Chaplain and Director of Jewish Studies are available to support families and with any questions you they may have regarding Kashrut.

Special dietary needs (including food allergies and intolerance)

Please refer to the Anaphylaxis Management Policy

- The College has a 'Nut Free' policy in the Early Learning Centre and Primary School but cannot guarantee there are no nuts on campus. Staff and students are strongly encouraged not to bring nut or nut based products onto the College Campus, however this cannot be guaranteed. All anaphylactic students are strongly encouraged to question the ingredients of all foods they eat.
- For children with individual medical dietary needs or allergies, the parent or carer will be asked to provide a health care plan written by a relevant health professional (e.g. doctor, specialist, dietician). The health care plan should include information about relevant medical conditions, emergency procedures and any nutrition intervention required.
- Where possible, children with special dietary needs will be catered for e.g. chagim. Parents and carers may be asked to provide kosher alternatives in some circumstances where the school is unable to provide a suitable food product.

Food Safety

School and Kindergarten:

All educators in the learning environment will:

- Familiarise themselves with the list of children with food allergies and act according to Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedures when required.
- Will ensure soap and hand towels are provided to children on a daily basis.
- Will ensure persons suffering from diseases which are likely to be transmitted through food are not involved in food handling
- Ensure any items placed in the fridge/freezer are covered with a lid, foil or plastic film.

When involving children in cooking

- Ensure adequate supervision is available for the planned experience.
- Ensure children wash their hands before participating in cooking experiences
- Ensure long hair is tied up.
- Clean up immediately any food dropped on the floor
- Cater for children who have special dietary requirements or offer them a suitable alternative.
- When handling food, encourage children to use utensils such as tongs, spoons and spatulas for cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

Kindergarten ONLY

All educators in the learning environment will:

- provide a container for dairy and meat food each morning to be refrigerated.
- check and record the fridge temperature daily in accordance with the Food Safety Program
- ensure that hand basins are only used for washing hands.
- provide posters above washbasins with information about correct hand washing procedures.

- make sure that the kitchens and utensils are clean at all times.
- dispose of any eating or drinking utensils that are chipped, broken or cracked and inform the management of any items which need replacement.
- restrict the food preparation area for that purpose only.

Engaging and Communicating with staff and educators

- all staff working with children need to be familiar with the Healthy Eating Policy
- educators recognise they are role models to children when selecting healthy food options
- staff and educators are supported to have healthy food and drink options for staff meetings and for professional learning. Fruit is supplied by the college weekly.

Engaging and communicating with parents and families

We will endeavour to communicate to families the food we will be offering children:

- The lunch order menu is available for parents via *flexischools*.
- A calendar of food we provide to children on chagim will be made available to parents throughout the year through the weekly newsletter.
- Parents are invited in regularly to participate in food preparation, serving and cooking with children.

Community Partnerships

- The service works with local health professionals, dieticians to support educators and the parents association to deliver and promote healthy eating initiatives.

Other Procedures

- Fundraising ideas should reflect the nutrition and healthy eating policy and promote healthy lifestyle messages.

Related Policies and Resources

- Anaphylaxis policy

Contact Details for Resources and Support

The following menu planning resources are available from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service at:
<http://heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-services/policies-and-guidelines>:

Monitoring and Review

This healthy eating policy will be monitored by educators, staff, families and management and will be reviewed as part of a policy review schedule.

Endorsed on: _____ Next review date: _____

Approved by the College Principal:



Date: December 2016