

LALOR EAST PRIMARY SCHOOL

HEALTHY EATING AND ORAL HEALTH POLICY

Purpose

Leadership and staff acknowledge the importance of healthy eating and oral health behaviours, which contribute to good health and overall wellbeing.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

- encouraging students to make healthy food and drink choices
- promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health
- creating a supportive environment for healthy eating and good oral health for students, staff, families and external visitors.

As a health promoting school, we will promote healthy eating and oral health to students, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

Policy statement

Background

Healthy eating and good nutrition have a major influence on the health and wellbeing of children and young people and a direct impact on their growth and development. Acknowledging the social and cultural role of food and the wide range of attitudes to it is important within the school environment.

Oral health is essential for the overall health and wellbeing of children and young people. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort and impact on general health and quality of life.

Whole school engagement

It is recognised that all staff at Lalor East Primary have an impact on students' health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating and good oral health. All members of our school community including staff, students, families and volunteers will be supported to meet this policy.

Definitions

Healthy eating: means eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.¹

Nutrition: Everyone needs food to provide the right balance of vitamins, minerals and nutrients (like protein, carbohydrates and fats) to feel energised and to help them grow and stay healthy. The meals we eat and the drinks we drink satisfy hunger and thirst throughout the day as well as fuel the body.

'Occasional' foods and drink: Also referred to as 'treats' (sometimes called junk food). These are foods like potato chips, chocolate, cakes, lollies, soft drinks and some takeaway food like hamburgers and hotdogs. These foods are usually low in nutrients and high in salt, sugar or fat.²

'Select carefully' foods and drink: Include foods like commercially prepared pastas, noodles and soups, meat products and fruit juice.

¹ Nutrition Australia Victorian Division, www.nutritionaustralia.org

² DEECD 2012 School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy

'Everyday' foods and drink: Include whole foods such as fresh fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals, lean cuts of meat, legumes, reduced fat dairy products and water.

Oral health: Oral Health is fundamental to overall health, wellbeing and quality of life. A healthy mouth enables people to eat, speak and socialise without pain, discomfort and embarrassment.³

Procedures

Healthy policies

- this policy is consistent with the *School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy* and *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole school healthy eating and oral health policies and are seen as key partners in promoting and supporting healthy eating and oral health initiatives in the school
- staff, families and students are provided with information about policy requirements.

Healthy physical environment

- the school canteen menu is assessed by the Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service as compliant with the *School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy*. The school canteen or food service works towards increasing the availability of 'everyday' foods and limits 'occasional' and 'select carefully' food and drinks
- food provided at camps, school excursions and sports days are in line with the *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy*
- families are encouraged to provide healthy lunchboxes
- healthy food options are encouraged for staff at meetings, professional learning events and in the staff room
- safe drinking water is available at all times and only water bottles filled with water are to be accessed during class. Sweet drinks are not permitted during class time
- the school seeks to ensure any sponsorship, advertisements or marketing of food and drinks is consistent with the school's healthy eating and oral health policies. Fundraising activities reflect the healthy eating and oral health policy and promote healthy lifestyle messages
- students are encouraged to undertake oral hygiene practices where appropriate
- students are encouraged to undertake safety practices to prevent against dental injuries, such as using mouth guards while participating in sport
- the school will provide information to staff and in first aid/sick bay areas about what to do in the event of a dental injury (i.e. when a tooth is knocked out).

Healthy social environment

- food and drink, food vouchers and sweets will be limited to special occasions as an incentive or reward
- students are given adequate time to eat their food in suitable and inviting eating spaces, which encourage the social interaction of students
- staff and families are encouraged to bring food and drinks which are in line with the school's healthy eating policy to support positive role modelling
- staff and families are encouraged to foster a healthy body image and enjoyment of eating
- the school respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of its community through recognising and valuing cultural and traditional beliefs about food and oral health.

Learning and skills

- healthy eating and oral health are incorporated into the curriculum, across multiple key learning areas

³ adapted from UK Department of Health (1994) in Spencer, JA, Australian Health Policy Institute, Commissioned Paper Series 2004

- students may have the opportunity to engage in regular food-related activities, such as planning and shopping for meals, growing, cooking and eating foods, which are culturally appropriate and varied
- teachers will discuss tooth brushing practices and why they are important with students
- staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote healthy eating and oral health across the curriculum.

Engaging children, young people, staff and families

- students are consulted about healthy eating and oral health initiatives via Junior School Council, student action teams or other representative structures
- families and staff are, on a regular basis, provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to promote and support healthy eating and oral health at school and at home
- families are encouraged to be involved in healthy eating and oral health initiatives at school
- families and students from culturally diverse backgrounds are engaged to ensure cultural values and expectations about food, eating and oral health are respected.

Community partnerships

- the school will work with local health professionals, services, businesses or agencies, where possible, to support staff, students and families to promote healthy eating.

Monitoring and review

The healthy eating and oral health policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, school council, student representatives and the health and wellbeing team at least once every three years.