

HEALTHY FOOD POLICY

1. 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. Hackham East school community endeavours to provide an environment that will have a positive impact on the nutritional health promoting a healthy lifestyle in our students, staff and parents.

Based on current research and statistics:

- Hackham East dental clinic reported in 2005, that the children in the Fleurieu region have the highest incidence of dental decay compared with other areas in the state;
- the World Health Organisation sees obesity as a major world epidemic;
- overweight children have a 50% more chance of being overweight adults;
- 25% of Australian children aged between 2-18 years are overweight with 8% obese as compared with 1995 when only 1.7 were obese.
- 9 million adult Australians are overweight and 3.3 million are in the 'high-risk' obese group;
- excess weight is more common among lower socio-economic and socially disadvantaged groups.

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.

2. Aims

Hackham East Schools Healthy Food Policy aims to promote a healthy lifestyle and provide an environment that will have a positive impact on the nutritional health of the students, staff and parents.

At Hackham East Schools we will promote:

- 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.

3. Objectives

Hackham East Schools is guided by the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and the Right Bite Strategy which recommends 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" as opposed to "Sometimes Foods".

Therefore:

- during the course of your child's schooling they may be in a "nut free class" due to some children's severe allergy to nuts;
- there are set fruit and vegetable breaks, rather than grazing all day;
- children are encouraged to drink water after the fruit and vegetable breaks (to rinse fruit sugars from teeth).

- children are encouraged to have a water bottle on their table allowing them to drink water throughout the day;
- healthy treats will comply with “DECS eat-well” guidelines with the intention of eliminating extrinsic **food** rewards
- students will receive explicit teaching about healthy food and nutrition as part of the health curriculum;
- students will be encouraged to refrigerate foods wherever possible
- all food cooked at school must comply with “DECS eat-well” guidelines.
- all food at class parties will reflect a balance of everyday and sometimes foods.
- all food and drinks consumed on camps and on excursions must comply with the “DECS eat-well guidelines and the Right Bite Strategy
- healthy lunchbox contents will be encouraged
- the canteen menu will comply with “DECS eat-well” guidelines;
- eating time is a supervised social environment;
- staff will be asked to model positive food choices and not have soft drinks and lollies in class
- the school adheres to the Food Safety Acts;
- children’s medical needs are supported;
- support is provided to families through the education of healthy food choices;
- the community is involved in promoting good nutrition (e.g. displays at BILO);
- any outside sponsorship/ organisation must comply with “DECS eat-well” policy and the Right Bite Strategy.
- Hackham East will be a Breast Feeding Friendly environment

Therefore at Hackham East Schools:

- soft drinks and energy type drinks are not to be consumed by students while at school or on excursions and camps.
- consumption of lollies by students are to be 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 etc)

4. **When enrolling a child, parents will be:**

- informed of the healthy food policy;
- requested to send their child to school with fresh fruit and vegetables and a bottle of water
- requested not to send their child to school with chips, sweet biscuits and other “sometimes foods” **on a daily basis**
- explained to that soft drinks and energy type drinks are not be consumed by students at school or on excursions and camps.
- And that the consumption of lollies by students while at school will be discouraged

REVIEW: This policy is reviewed by the Health Promoting/Drug Strategy Committee each year.
Dated 12th September 2009