



Healthy Food Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

'Healthy eating is fundamental to good health throughout life for all people. It underpins healthy growth and development, contributes to health and wellbeing, positive mental health and quality of life.'

DECS Healthy Eating Guidelines, 2004

- Eating habits are established early in life and influence growth and development in childhood and adolescence, as well as one's health and well-being throughout life.
- Southern Montessori School promotes and supports the development of healthy eating habits in young children, in accordance with the philosophy and methodology of Dr Maria Montessori, and guided by current medical data in the areas of hygiene and nutrition.
- Dietary factors are significant in the prevention of life-style diseases. Diet related life-style diseases include obesity, heart disease, high blood-pressure, constipation and certain forms of cancers. It is estimated that 60% of adult deaths are diet related. In many cases these are preventable.

PROCEDURE

The school, together with parents, has a responsibility for the nutrition education of students.

Therefore, Southern Montessori School requires that students are supplied with nutritious snacks and lunches that are in keeping with the National Dietary Guidelines for Australia and the Healthy Eating Guidelines for Schools and Preschools.

In keeping with the guidelines the school expects that school snacks and lunches will consist of:

- vegetables, legumes and fruits
- cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
- lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
- yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives
- only water as a drink
- foods that are low in saturated fats
- foods that are low in salt
- foods that are low in sugar or have no added sugar

PLEASE NOTE: *That the majority of pre-packaged snack foods marketed for children do not meet these guidelines and are therefore not considered appropriate for school snacks and lunches.*

Children bring with them awareness and knowledge of the food their families eat, and most know a lot about foods that are advertised. However, we acknowledge that the information given to children through the media is heavily biased towards the consumption of foods that are not needed for healthy growth and development.

Therefore, Southern Montessori School will:

- implement classroom nutrition education
- provide opportunities for children to prepare and cook healthy, appetising food
- place a strong emphasis across the curriculum on developing the skills of critical thinking to enable students to evaluate the media messages they receive so that they will be better equipped to make healthy food choices

In addition, and in keeping with the Practical Life aspects of the Montessori curriculum, staff, students and volunteers will be expected to demonstrate a high standard of personal and food hygiene during the preparation and supply of food at school.

Therefore, the School, as part of its overall curriculum will:

- include lessons on personal hygiene
- demonstrate correct food handling procedures

Our knowledge and understanding of dietary requirements changes, is informed by research and wider societal health trends.

Therefore, Southern Montessori School will:

- support staff professional development opportunities in this area

OUTCOMES

As a result of the implementation of this policy students will be better able to:

- make informed food choices and know more about non-processed foods that are not often advertised and promoted in the media
- develop positive attitudes towards preparing and enjoying a wide range of healthy foods
- show an interest and an appreciation of the food choices of other cultures
- establish dietary habits which, in combination with exercise, will contribute to a healthy life-style

FUNDRAISING

Whilst raising much needed funds is an important aspect of school life, we recognise that schools play a role in influencing children's current eating patterns as well as forming good eating habits for life. Therefore, as part of our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our students, we will endeavour, wherever possible, to choose fundraisers that complement the health messages students receive in the classroom and that support healthy lifestyles.