

Food & Nutrition Policy

“Childhood is a period of continuous education about eating and good nutrition practices . Caregivers can foster the formation of sound food habits.” (NHMRC 2003: 22,30)

Children need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. Nutritional quality is important to ensure children receive levels of nutrients specified in recommended dietary intakes. The food provided at St Pius X OSHC will be nutritious and varied. Snack times and activities involving food preparation will provide positive learning experiences for children, who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents will be consulted and encouraged to share family and multicultural values and experiences to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food to meet children's nutritional needs.

HOW POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

- Food is prepared and stored hygienically and safely, according to *Food Act 2001*.
- The service will provide children with balanced snacks (and meals on occasions) which meet the recommended nutritional needs of children.
- The service supports and serves food in accordance with the Australian Government’s ‘Guide to Healthy Eating’ (Smith et al, 1998) and ‘Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia (NHMRC, 2003) and Nutrition Australia’s website resources. These principles include:
 - Eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, legumes and nuts
 - Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles) preferably wholegrain
 - Include lean meat, fish, poultry and or alternatives
 - Include milks, yoghurts cheese and/or alternatives.
 - Choose water as a drink (juice is a sometimes food)
 - Limit saturated fat
 - Choose foods low in salt
 - Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars
- Snack and mealtimes will be treated as social occasions. Staff members will interact with the children to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation of a variety of foods and drinks.
- Where possible, snacks and drinks will reflect a wide variety of cultures, especially the cultural backgrounds of families and within the local community.
- Snacks and drinks will be appetising and provide variety. Where possible, fresh produce will be used. Children will be encouraged to regularly try new foods.
- Preservatives and other additives will be limited as much as possible.
- Foods which contain hidden or added sugars will be avoided or limited.
- Snacks will be planned with input from children, parents and staff.
- Children will be encouraged to drink water and drinking water will always be available and accessible to staff and children.
- Children will be encouraged to try different food but will never be forced to eat. Their food likes and dislikes and their family's religious and cultural beliefs regarding food will always be respected.
- Where children are on special diets, the parents may be asked to provide a list of suitable and unsuitable foods and their child's food preferences or to supply special food.
- The denial of food will never be used as punishment.

- The importance of good, healthy food will be discussed with children as appropriate.
- Information on nutrition, food handling and storage will be displayed at the service and provided to parents.
- During vacation care, parents will be asked to provide their child's lunch and drinks, except when otherwise stated on the vacation care program. Water is always available as well as afternoon snack.
- Lunches provided on Pupil Free Days and some Vacation Care days are seen as special treats and may include Take Away Foods such as Pizza or McDonalds. These will be portrayed as “treats” to be consumed infrequently, and not part of a staple diet.
- When food is prepared as part of the children's program of activities, the ingredients and preparation techniques used will be hygienic and safe and taught as such to the children.
- Discussions with children will highlight the differences between foods which are ‘Everyday foods’, ‘Sometimes Foods’ and ‘Treats’.

References:

Smith, Smith, Kellett & Schmerlaib (1998) **The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating: Background for nutrition educators**. Aust Govt Dept of Health and Ageing.

National Health and Medical Research Council (2003) **Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia**. Commonwealth of Australia (Currently being reviewed.)

Nutrition Australia

www.NutritionAustralia.org

Food Intolerance Network

<http://www.fedupwithfoodadditives.info>