

# Food and Nutrition Policy



## QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

### Rationale:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the preschool promotes safe, healthy eating habits in line with the Right Bite: Easy Guide to Healthy Food and Drink Supply (DfE Policy), DfE 'Eat well Be Active' program staff at the kindergarten model and encourage healthy eating behaviours. We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit the children in three ways

The policy is consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* document.

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
Element 2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit children in three ways:

1. Short term: maximise growth, development and activity whilst minimising
2. Long term: minimises the risk of diet related disease later in life.
3. Ensuring the children are exposed to a variety of different foods, including crunchy foods while at the centre, as advised by speech pathologists Food and Nutrition Curriculum
4. Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing and this is vital for positive engagement in learning activities.

Therefore:

- food and drink are consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children
- staff at this preschool model and encourage healthy eating habits
- parents and caregivers are encouraged and supported to supply healthy food and drink that fits within the Right Bite Strategy for their children at kindergarten
- we will support families by providing education, information and examples of healthy eating.

Educators aim to promote healthy nutritional habits in a safe, supportive and non-judgmental environment for all children. Our service recognizes the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and the wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care.

## Curriculum

Our preschool's food and nutrition curriculum will provide:

- Children will have the opportunity to grow their own food and be involved in the process of food production from the garden to the table
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical skills in preparing and cooking healthy food on a regular basis.
- Is consistent with the, and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*.
- Include activities that provide children with the knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy choices and to learn about the variety of foods available for good health Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where practicable
- Includes the principles of the Early Years Learning Framework document, Outcome 3: 'Children have a Strong Sense of Wellbeing'
- Includes the principles of the National Quality Standards
- Healthy Eating will be promoted through the 'Eat a Rainbow' program, 'Right Bite' posters and appropriate story books.

## The Learning Environment

Children at our preschool:

- are required to bring a named drink bottle containing water only. Fresh, cool filtered tap water is also available at the centre. Educators actively encourage the children to drink water throughout the day.
- children are provided with opportunities to eat together with staff as a shared social experience and educators promote healthy food choices and behaviours.
- will not be forced to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat. As in our 'Eat a Rainbow' Healthy food program children will be encouraged to try different foods but not forced to eat.
- will eat routinely at scheduled break times and during morning and afternoon activity time
- eat in a positive, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours
- are educated about not sharing their food with other children due to possible allergic reactions

Families at our preschool:

- have access to information about healthy eating choices and nutrition for their children
- have the opportunity to contribute staff will talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating
- have the opportunity to contribute to the development of policy

Our staff

- educators will be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special dietary needs and consult with families to develop individual management plans
- educators encourage the importance of healthy meals and 'snacks' as part of the curriculum.

Our preschool

- understands and promotes the importance of breakfast and regular meals for children
- teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum
- is a breastfeeding friendly site

## **Food Guidelines and Foody Safety**

- Fresh fruit, vegetables, dried fruits and cheese are recommended. Children provided with apples and carrots are to be encouraged to chew slowly to reduce the risk of choking. Grapes are recommended to come to preschool chopped in half to reduce the risk of choking.
- Fruit Time: parents are asked to supply fruit or vegetables which will provide children with important vitamins and minerals. This will also encourage a taste for healthy foods and chewing to promote oral muscles development and speech / sound production.
- Foods unsuitable for fruit time include packaged foods (dried fruit is acceptable), cakes, sweets and chocolates. Cordials and sweetened fruit juices are not recommended.
- Mount Compass Preschool Centre is a food aware kindergarten, so foods will not be banned. Families will be made aware of food allergens via a note sent home to all families in the enrolment pack
- Please provide food for children in accordance with the DfE "Right Bite –Healthy Food and Drink Strategy". eg Sandwich with healthy filling, crisp breads with cheese or alternative, cold meats, salad, yoghurt, muffins, homemade foods.
- Highly salted pre-packaged foods such as chips, burger-rings and twisties, etc. are not recommended
- The Kindergarten aims to promote healthy food and promotes environmental awareness by reducing throw away packaging. (See staff for further healthy lunch box ideas and ways to reduce packaging)
- Families are asked to please assist children to place lunch box in refrigerator.
- The Healthy Eating Guidelines are promoted for lunch time.
- Parents are encouraged to discuss any issues regarding the policy with staff.
- Children's lunch boxes are to be kept in the fridge until lunchtime. It is recommended that an icepack be included to keep the food cool and lessen the chance of bacterial growth on those very hot days
- Food cannot be heated for children at the centre.
- Correct hand washing by children is actively encouraged before and after eating and prior to food preparation. ie using soap, running water and single use disposable towels
- Staff will ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned before and after food preparation
- Staff must wash hands and wear food preparation gloves when engaged in any food related experiences eg. Daily fruit times, cooking activities, Eat a Rainbow Program
- Safe practices are always promoted by educators.

## **Storing of Food**

- ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 °C or below and the freezer is maintained at -17°C or below
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked daily Cleaning
- ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly and door seals are checked and replaced if not in good repairs

## **Birthday Celebrations**

- We do acknowledge the child's special day with a pretend cake, birthday sticker and candles, and sing 'Happy Birthday' at one of our mat times during the day.
- As many children these days have food allergies, we do not advocate bringing in cakes or party food to share with the children. Please don't feel you need to bring anything in for your child but if you feel you would like to bring in something special to celebrate with the group some suggestions are:

stickers, party blowers, a balloon. These are best given out at the end of the day when the children say goodbye. Please speak to a staff member if you would like to bring something different in for your child.

### Food Allergies and Related Health Support Planning

- Please ensure you alert the educators upon enrolment to any food allergies your child may have.
- An up-to-date, signed Care Plan / Action Plan will be required. Please refer to the Department for Education Children’s Health and Medical Requirements Policy for further information.
- Educators will liaise with parents of children with allergies to ensure safe foods are provided during cooking sessions held at the centre.
- Children who are allergic to foods will have their photo on the medical board in the kitchen and office.

### Sources

- 1.Right Bite: Easy Guide to Healthy Food and Drink Supply (Department for Education Policy)
- 2.Eat Well Be Active Community Program
- 3.NQS Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety
- 4..Department for Education - The Early Years Learning Framework

Endorsed by Governing Council April 2024 Review April 2026

Table 1: Revision Record – Started February 2024

VERSION	APPROVAL DATE	NEXT REVIEW	REVISION DESCRIPTION
1.1	April 2024	April 2026	Whole of policy reviewed and wording and sub heading changed to line in up with NQS and DfE Policy changes.

