



Oaklands Estate Kindergarten

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Government
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Department for Education

NUTRITION AND FOOD POLICY

Children mainly learn eating habits from their parents and other people who care for them. These habits learnt during childhood tend to continue into adulthood.

Snack time at kindergarten is an important break in the session and provides a social environment for the children, where children are encouraged to develop healthy eating habits.

RATIONALE

Healthy eating helps young children to grow strong bodies, develop normally and reach their potential for learning. As young children cannot select and prepare food for themselves, the adults in the child's life become responsible for making healthy food choices for them.

Based on the AUSTRALIAN DIETARY GUIDELINES for children and adolescents & Dept for Education "Right Bite Strategy", it is emphasised that there is a need to:

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods.

- Eat plenty of breads and cereals, vegetables and fruits.
- Include dairy products such as milk, cheese and yogurt.
- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat.
- Balance food intake with physical activity.
- Eat only a moderate amount of sugars and foods containing added sugars.
- Choose low salt foods and use salt sparingly.
- Teach children to avoid foods that can cause adverse reactions (allergies) and not to share foods with others that may have adverse reactions.

NUTRITION POLICY AIMS

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage and support children to develop healthy eating habits.
- Promote children's understanding of how food affects health and the relationship between healthy eating and good health.
- Ensure that food provided at the kindergarten and foods bought from home will reflect the Australian Dietary Guidelines for children and adolescents and DECD "Right Bite Strategy".
- Support children who have health and cultural needs relating to special dietary requirements.
- Raise awareness of good nutrition principles.

NUTRITION STRATEGIES

Snack Guidelines

- Children should bring either a piece of fruit, salad vegetables and/or a sandwich to eat at snack time. Sandwiches can contain any fillings except for those containing nut products (** Peanut paste and “nutella” contain nut products. Due to children with severe nut allergies, these products will not be permitted*). Please note parents will be advised at the start of the year of any additional food restrictions. For example, egg and fish.
- The kindergarten is aware of foods linked with a high risk of choking. Snack and lunch times are supervised with children sitting down to eat their food in order to reduce this risk of choking.

Lunch Guidelines

- Children should bring a lunch containing some or all of the following: sandwich, fruit, salad vegetables, cheese, yogurt, dried/savoury biscuits. Cultural food norms should be acknowledged and accepted.
- Children shall be encouraged to drink water with their lunch.

Drink Guidelines

- Fresh drinking water is to be available for the children at all times.
- Children are to bring their own drink container and should only bring water.
- Lunch boxes should have cold packs to retain freshness and avoid spoiling.

Cooking Guidelines

- Due to dietary restrictions and allergies we shall use recipes that are vegetarian and substitute ingredients that are gluten free, dairy free, egg and nut free. This means all children can participate in cooking activities.
- Prior to any cooking parents shall be advised of the activity for their own peace of mind.

Craft Guidelines

- When donating empty food packaging/ boxes for children to use for craft all parents shall be made aware not to donate any packaging that has contained non permitted foodstuffs.
- Staff shall also be ingredient aware of craft supplies used by the children for example, glue.
- These guidelines also apply to craft and sensory activities in the kindergarten for example, making our own play doh.

Special Occasions and Birthday Guidelines

- It is acknowledged that on some occasions there is a desire to have foods which are outside the general policy of the centre for example, birthdays, special events. Please speak with staff as we prefer that food is not brought into the kindergarten on these days and instead shall acknowledge the event for example, by singing “happy birthday”.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff

- Shall encourage children to try new foods.
- Staff members shall supervise children when eating.
- Shall ensure that children drink sufficiently to avoid dehydration.
- Shall ensure that children do not swap their foodstuffs with another child to avoid unknown adverse reactions.
- Learning about food and nutrition shall be included into the curriculum for example, growing vegetables, hands on cooking and tasting experiences, food awareness activities.
- Principles of good hygiene practice shall be incorporated into daily routines to support this policy for example, hand washing.
- Food shall not be used as a form of punishment or reward either by its provision or denial.

- Shall allow children to eat at other times, if they are hungry.
- Shall provide parents with nutrition information via pamphlets, newsletters and the noticeboard, about the importance of good nutrition, healthy food choices and balanced, varied meals.
- Shall respect the food preferences of children.
- Shall act as role models in relation to their own food choices at the centre.

Parents

- Parents shall be made aware of this policy upon enrolment of their child at the centre.
- Parents shall be encouraged to support this nutrition policy and where difficulties arise in the provision of suitable foods, parents will be consulted. **Cakes, biscuits, chips, chocolates, lollies and fruit/muesli bars are not considered as suitable snacks.**
- Provision for children who require specific foods because of dietary health needs or because of cultural/religious beliefs can all be discussed with the director.

OUTCOMES

It is envisaged that adoption of this policy, and associated strategies, shall result in normal physical development of the children and encourage the children to adopt healthy eating habits. It is further envisaged that no child shall exhibit any allergic reaction whilst under care by the kindergarten.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Oaklands Estate Kindergarten staff and Governing Council, as representative of the kindergarten community.

Oaklands Estate Kindergarten Governing Council endorsed this policy on **11 April 2022**.

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or as necessary.