



Healthy Eating Policy

Rationale:

- Healthy nutritional habits are essential to the growth and development of children and school communities can help students develop healthy habits to live, learn, grow and play (Nutrition Australia, Better Health – Vic Government)
- Guidelines from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) promote healthy eating plans, increased physical activity and behavioural modification as the first approach to managing obesity for individuals, bringing about a range of health benefits for later life.
- The number of overweight children in Australia has doubled in recent years, with a quarter of children considered overweight or obese. This rise is disturbing, because it causes health problems and can lead to social problems: they are more likely to be teased by their peers or to develop low self-esteem or body image problems. It is feared that this generation of 10 year-olds may be the first to have a life expectancy less than their parents, due to excess weight which predisposes people to diabetes, heart disease, strokes and cancer.

Purposes:

- To develop within students an informed appreciation of healthy eating habits which includes drinking water and the ability to make healthy choices.
- To work towards ensuring any foods provided at the school are consistent with a healthy eating philosophy.
- To create a foundation for students, whereby they understand the link from healthy eating now to a healthier future.

Guidelines:

- These guidelines are composed from National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Nutrition Australia ([See Appendix 1](#)), The Australian Dietary Guidelines ([See Appendix 2](#)) and Better Health – Vic Government ([See Appendix 3](#)).
- Our whole school curriculum should have an approach that reflects the Victorian Curriculum and encourages healthy eating during and after school hours.
- Teachers and students should be encouraged to bring fresh fruit and vegetables in their lunch boxes every day.
- The school should have a strategy in place to encourage all students to drink water throughout the school day, especially during physical activity.
- All students should understand the importance of not sharing food or water bottles, and of not eating the food belonging to others.
- Staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating habits whilst at school.
- Lunch orders (for Friday Fundraiser) should reflect this Healthy Eating policy.
- Families should be supported through the promotion of healthy food and drink choices (e.g. display, newsletter insets, workshops, healthy events and the Maldon Primary School website).
- Food brought by students to school should be grouped according to:
 - * food encouraged (Always/Green),
 - * food allowed (Sometimes/Orange),
 - * food not allowed at school (Occasional/Red).

Implementation at Maldon Primary School:

- Lessons relating to healthy foods and healthy eating will reflect the Victorian Curriculum through Health and Physical Education.
- At least twice per year, the school will have an event which focuses on a variety of healthy foods eg Harmony Day, healthy breakfast morning.

- The school will involve itself in local strategies designed to raise awareness of, or to promote healthy foods eg: local fruit growing, Market Fresh, local dietitian and oral health specialist.
- Children will have access to their own water bottle at any time during class time (no sweet drinks are permitted).
- Water fountains will be accessible to all children, at all grade levels, during playtimes.
- Daily fruit and vegetable breaks are allocated at all levels in which students are allowed to eat fruit and vegetables only.
- Chips, fried foods, confectionery and high sugar drinks such as soft drinks, energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters, will be excluded from Friday Fundraisers, and should not be brought to school by children for eating at play/lunch time.
- A list of suggestions for snacks and lunches will be compiled and available for families on the website and at the Office.
- School community members (staff and families), including new families to the school, will be informed of the healthy eating policy and will be provided with regular information (display, newsletter inserts, workshops) to assist them to meet this policy requirement.
- Fundraising activities will complement our healthy food philosophy.
- Special days, such as Japanese Day, will also reflect the policy.
- Staff will inform the principal of any student who appear to be consistently provided with inadequate lunches and snacks.
- Healthy Eating practices will include:
 - ❖ Daily 10.00am Healthy Snack/'Munch & Crunch' (fruit and vegetables only) for all classes.
 - ❖ Promoting that fresh fruit and vegetables be included in students' lunch boxes every day.
 - ❖ Free Fruit Friday for all students (and be expended to include more vegetables).
 - ❖ The school working towards cultivating, harvesting and cooking school produce.
 - ❖ The exclusion of lollies/confectionery as class rewards.
- Food groupings, as found in the guidelines, will be communicated to parents and caregivers as follows:

Every day/Green foods	Select carefully/Orange foods	Not at school/Red foods –
Fruit Vegetables Sandwiches with healthy fillings Yoghurt (be careful of sugar content) Cheese and dry biscuits Home-cooked savoury Healthy 'nude' food	Home-cooked food eg cakes, slices Special occasion foods eg birthday cake Fruit juice on Fridays	Soft drinks Chips Chocolate or lollies Packaged food/snack bars high in salt, sugar or fat Other drinks like fruit drinks

Appendix 1: Healthy Eating Pyramid (Nutrition Australia)

The Healthy Eating Pyramid encourages Australians to enjoy a variety of foods from every food group, every day.

The layers of the Healthy Eating Pyramid

The **foundation layers** include the three plant-based food groups:

- **vegetables and legumes**
- **fruits**
- **grains**

These layers make up the largest portion of the Pyramid because plant foods should make up the largest portion of our diet – around 70% of what we eat!

Plant foods contain a wide variety of nutrients like vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. They are also the main source of carbohydrates and fibre in our diet.

Older children, teens and adults should aim to have at least 2 serves of **fruit** and 5 serves of **vegetables or legumes** each day.

From the **grains** food group, choose mostly whole grains (such as brown rice, oats and quinoa), and wholemeal/wholegrain/high cereal fibre varieties of bread, pasta, crisp breads and cereal foods (over highly processed, refined varieties).

[How much should I eat from each food group?](#)

The **middle layer** includes the **milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives** and the **lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes** food groups.

Foods in the **milk, yoghurt, cheese & alternatives** group primarily provide us with calcium and protein, plus other vitamins and minerals. This food group also refers to non-dairy options such as soy, rice or cereal milks which have at least 100mg per 100ml of added calcium. Choose reduced fat options of these foods to limit excess kilojoules from saturated fat.

Foods in the **lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds, legumes** section are our main sources of protein. But each food also provides a unique mix of nutrients, including iodine, iron, zinc, B12 vitamins and healthy fats. We should aim to have a variety of meat and non-meat options from this food group.



The top layer refers to healthy fats because we need small amounts every day to support heart health and brain function. We should choose foods that contain healthy fats instead of foods that contain saturated fats and trans fats.

Choose unrefined polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats from plant sources, such as extra virgin olive oil, nut and seed oils. Limit the amount of saturated fat you consume and avoid trans fats.

We also get healthy fats from foods in the other food groups, such as avocados, nuts, seeds and fish, so we only need a little bit extra from oils and spreads each day.

Appendix 2:

1. What are the Australian Dietary Guidelines?

The Australian Dietary Guidelines give advice on eating for health and wellbeing. They're called dietary guidelines because it's your usual diet that influences your health. Based on the latest scientific evidence, they describe the best approach to eating for a long and healthy life.

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* have information about the types and amounts of foods, food groups and dietary patterns that aim to:

- promote health and wellbeing;
- reduce the risk of diet-related conditions, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity; and
- reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some types of cancers.

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* are for use by health professionals, policy makers, educators, food manufacturers, food retailers and researchers, so they can find ways to help Australians eat healthy diets.

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* apply to all healthy Australians, as well as those with common health conditions such as being overweight. They do not apply to people who need special dietary advice for a medical condition, or to the frail elderly.

2. What is the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating?

The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* is a food selection guide which visually represents the proportion of the five food groups recommended for consumption each day.

3. Why do we need Dietary Guidelines?

A healthy diet improves quality of life and wellbeing, and protects against chronic diseases. For infants and children, good nutrition is essential for normal growth.

Unfortunately, diet-related chronic diseases are currently a major cause of death and disability among Australians.

4. How do I make healthy food choices?

There are many ways for you to have a diet that promotes health and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide many options in their recommendations. The advice focuses on dietary patterns that promote health and wellbeing rather than recommending that you eat – or completely avoid – specific foods.

Many of the health problems due to poor diet in Australia stem from excessive intake of foods that are high in energy, saturated fat, added sugars and/or added salt but relatively low in nutrients. These include fried and fatty take-away foods, baked products like pastries, cakes and biscuits, savoury snacks like chips, and sugar-sweetened drinks. If these foods are consumed regularly they can increase the risk of excessive weight gain and other diet-related conditions and diseases.

Many diet-related health problems in Australia are also associated with inadequate intake of nutrient-dense foods, including vegetables, legumes/beans, fruit and wholegrain cereals. A wide variety of these nutritious foods should be consumed every day to promote health and wellbeing and help protect against chronic disease.

5. Do the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend that I only eat certain foods?

No. The *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and consumer resources assist by helping you to choose foods for a healthy diet. They also provide advice on how many serves of these food groups you need to consume everyday depending upon your age, gender, body size and physical activity levels.

Evidence suggests Australians need to eat more:

- vegetables and legumes/beans
- fruits
- wholegrain cereals
- reduced fat milk, yoghurt, cheese
- fish, seafood, poultry, eggs, legumes/beans (including soy), and nuts and seeds.
- red meat (young females only)
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Evidence suggests Australians need to eat less:

- starchy vegetables (i.e. there is a need to include a wider variety of different types and colours of vegetables)
- refined cereals
- high and medium fat dairy foods
- red meats (adult males only)
- food and drinks high in saturated fat, added sugar, added salt, or alcohol (e.g. fried foods, most take-away foods from quick service restaurants, cakes and biscuits, chocolate and confectionery, sweetened drinks).

Appendix 3:

Health problems associated with obesity: (Better Health Channel, State Government of Victoria)

Most of the health problems associated with obesity will become obvious in adulthood. Early signs of these later problems are commonly found in children.

Potential health problems for obese children include:

- type 2 diabetes – while this condition is most commonly seen in adults, it is now also being diagnosed in children
- eating disorders such as bulimia or binge eating
- orthopaedic disorders – problems with foot structure
- liver problems, including fatty liver
- respiratory disorders, such as blocked airways and restrictions in the chest wall, which cause breathlessness during exercise
- sleep apnoea – this is a condition that causes difficulty breathing when sleeping. It also causes snoring, waking often and poor sleep. It makes people feel tired and contributes to poor concentration during the day
- cardiomyopathy – a problem with the heart muscle, caused when extra effort is needed to pump blood.