



Meadow Heights Primary School

Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact 9305 2033 or visit the front office.

Purpose

Leadership and staff acknowledge the importance of healthy eating and oral health behaviours, which contribute to good health and overall wellbeing. This policy confirms our commitment to:

- encouraging students to make healthy food and drink choices
- promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health
- creating a supportive environment for healthy eating and good oral health for students, staff, families and external visitors.

As a health promoting school, we will promote healthy eating and oral health to students, staff and families through learning, policies, creating a safe and healthy physical and social environment, and developing community links and partnerships.

Policy statement

Background

Healthy eating and good nutrition have a major influence on the health and wellbeing of children and young people, and a direct impact on their growth and development. Acknowledging the social and cultural role of food, and the wide range of attitudes to it, is important within the school environment.

Oral health is essential for the overall health and wellbeing of children and young people. Oral diseases can negatively affect individuals through pain, discomfort, and impacts on general health and quality of life. The main oral health condition experienced by children is tooth decay with one in four Victorian children aged 5–12 years having filled teeth. Tooth decay is Australia's most prevalent health problem despite being almost entirely preventable.¹

Whole school engagement

It is recognised that every member of **Meadow Heights Primary School** has an impact on students' health and can contribute to creating an environment that promotes healthy eating and good oral

health. All members of our school community, including staff, students, families and volunteers, will be supported to meet this policy.

Definitions

Healthy eating and oral health: For the purposes of this policy and for the Healthy Schools Achievement Program, the 'Healthy Eating and Oral Health' health priority area focuses on supporting healthy eating, including nutrition, positive food habits and food literacy, and supporting oral health and hygiene practices.

Healthy eating: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. These are:

- fruit
- vegetables and legumes/beans
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
- lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans.

Healthy eating also means eating in a way that is socially and culturally appropriate, having regular meals and snacks and eating food to satisfy hunger, appetite and energy needs.²

Nutrition: The process of providing or obtaining the food necessary for health and growth.³

Discretionary/sometimes food and drink: Discretionary/sometimes food and drink is high in fat, sugar and salt or a combination of these.⁴ They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged. Examples of discretionary food and drink include:

- chocolate, confectionery, jelly
- sweet biscuits, high fat/salt savoury biscuits, chips
- high sugar/high fat cakes and slices
- cream, ice cream
- deep fried foods (e.g. hot chips) and pastry-based foods (e.g. pies, sausage rolls and pasties)
- most fast food and takeaway foods
- some processed meats (e.g. sausages, frankfurts/hot dogs, salami, strasbourg, devon, some commercial chicken nuggets and fish fingers)
- soft drinks, fruit juice and fruit drinks, cordial, sports drinks, energy drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water.⁵

Oral health: A standard of health of the oral and related tissues that enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment and that contributes to general wellbeing.⁶

Food literacy: A collection of inter-related knowledge, skills and behaviours required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food to meet (dietary) needs.⁷

Procedures and responsibilities

Leadership and commitment

- Staff, families and students are involved in guiding the development and implementation of the whole school Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy and are seen as key partners in promoting and supporting healthy eating and oral health initiatives in the school.
- Staff, families and students are provided with information about policy requirements, with opportunities to provide feedback and input.

Healthy physical environment

- Water (preferably tap water) is accessible for drinking at all times.
- Healthy food and drinks are promoted and discretionary/sometimes food and drinks are discouraged for snacks and lunches brought into the school.
- All school-provided food and drinks comply with the [School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy](#) and the canteen menu has been assessed using the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service \(HEAS\) FoodChecker tool](#).
- Discretionary food and drinks do not appear in any school fundraising, sponsorship, advertising or marketing activities.
- Students and staff are provided with inviting spaces and sufficient time to eat.
- Safe food handling practices are followed, including safe procedures for food storage, handling, preparation and disposal and food safety training.

Healthy culture

- Diversity and cultural practices are considered when implementing this policy and healthy eating and oral health practices.
- Food, drinks or food vouchers are not used as an incentive or reward.
- Staff and visitors role model healthy eating.
- Celebrations and events include healthy food options and discourage discretionary options.
- Oral hygiene practices are promoted and undertaken at the school where appropriate.

Student teaching and learning

- Healthy eating and oral health messages are embedded in the curriculum. The curriculum guides students to develop food literacy knowledge and skills to enable them to make healthy food and drink choices and develop a healthy relationship with food.
- Staff are supported to access professional development and resources about healthy eating and oral health education.
- Students are included in the design and implementation of healthy eating and oral health initiatives.

Supported staff

- Staff are supported to consume healthy food and drinks and maintain good oral health practices at work.
- Healthy eating and oral health information and policy requirements are included in staff orientation/induction.
- When food is provided to staff for meetings, celebrations and events, healthy food options are included and discretionary options are discouraged.

Families and community partnerships

- Healthy eating and oral health information is provided to families and the wider community, such as information about local dental services and how to create healthy and nutritious meals.
- Partnerships are established with relevant organisations and health professionals to support healthy eating and oral health practices where appropriate.

Relevant legislation and policy documents

- [School Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy](#)
- [National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)
- [Oral Health Messages for the Australian Public](#)
- [Department of Health – Food Handler Training](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Section 2.3.5\)](#)
- [Food Act 1984](#)
- [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#)

Related school policies

- Physical Activity and Movement
- Anaphylaxis/Food Allergies
- Fundraising
- Camps and Excursions

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2025
Approved by	School Council
Next scheduled review date	June 2028