



## The Cottage School Inc.

### FOOD AND NUTRITION

Approved by Committee August 2021

## Rationale

A positive and effective food policy is fundamental to The Cottage School and its statement of [Philosophy, Values and Principles](#). At The Cottage school we encourage and expect parents to provide their children with healthy foods from the five food groups, limit foods high in sugar/fat/salt and only use environmentally aware packaging.

Diets rich in nutrients based on the five food groups are essential for children's energy, growth, brain function and development. Developing healthy eating habits in the early years supports these behaviours continuing as a child grows and reduces the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

We value and continue to teach children the art of eating in a social context and with an environmental awareness. Through developing healthy eating habits in primary school, we encourage and set the stage for these habits to continue through into adulthood, increasing the likelihood of positive health outcomes throughout later life. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating suggests as follows:

*Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day:*

- *Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans*
- *Fruit*
- *Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley*
- *Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans*
- *Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives,*

*And drink plenty of water.*

We aspire to be good citizens, aware of our environmental impact, minimising our carbon footprint and promoting food sustainability.

## Everyday and Sometimes Foods

Cottage School students will be provided with healthy and nutritious 'everyday foods' from home. **Everyday foods** are foods from the five food groups. It is recommended that a variety of foods from these groups be eaten every day. Whilst at school (including weekly cooked lunch, Environment Days and school camps) children will eat 'everyday foods'.

**Sometimes foods** are foods that don't fit into the five food groups, and should only be eaten sometimes, and in small amounts. They are foods high in sugar, salt and fat and include chocolate, lollies, chips, sweet drinks, ice cream, jam, fried foods, pastries and some cakes and biscuits. 'Sometimes foods' may be shared occasionally as a result of the Choosing program cooking, on camp, at Garden Market, at Working Bees or sold at the Fair. In these instances, sometimes foods will be offered alongside a range of everyday foods such as fruit and vegies, crackers, dips.

## Implementation

The school supports the development of healthy eating habits by:

- Providing nutritious cooked lunches for the whole school, on a specified day each week, to be determined each term/year.
- Supporting children to try a variety of foods they may not normally eat in the home setting.
- Valuing the significance of preparing nutritious meals and eating with others as an important social activity.
- Supporting families to provide healthy nutritious food, including providing information and resources on everyday lunchbox ideas if requested
- Giving children opportunities to grow, harvest and prepare nutritious foods alongside a hands-on experiential food program in the classroom and kitchen

### Morning snack

- Fresh fruit, vegetables, carbohydrates (eg. baked items such as bread or savoury muffins) or crackers and proteins like cheese or humous
- 'Sometimes foods' are not permitted at morning snack.
- While the emphasis for families and the school would be on celebratory activities or environments to recognise a child's birthday, fruit platters with dried and /or unusual fruits are an ideal morning birthday treat for children – no cakes or muffins please.
- Morning snacks are often shared when health conditions permit

### Lunch

- Children eat lunch together every day in one form or another.
- Children are given plenty of time to eat their lunch in a relaxed environment without feeling rushed.
- These lunch experiences provide an opportunity for the children to experience eating their own or shared food, when health conditions permit, in a social setting.

It also provides opportunities for establishing and understanding social norms when dining together and encourages constructive conversations with teachers and peers on healthy eating and shared interests.

- Lunchbox suggestions for both school and Environment Days:
  - Vegetables: lettuce, cucumber, carrot, spinach, avocado, tomatoes etc
  - Fruit: apple, watermelon, grapes, mandarin, sultanas, dates etc
  - Protein: meats, cheese, tofu to be stored safely
  - Sandwiches, wraps, rolls etc made from wholemeal flours with healthy fillings
  - Lunches should be insulated and kept cool with an ice-brick if they are not stored in a fridge.
- do not bring packaged and/or processed meals (eg tubs or squeezies of yoghurt, boxes of sultanas, packets of crisps or rice crackers etc)
- 'Sometimes foods' are not permitted for lunch
- Students in Kinder to year 4 should not bring food that requires re-heating. Biggies have access to a microwave oven.

### **Cooked lunch**

Our weekly cooked lunch offers the opportunity for everyone at the school to eat together, to try new foods, to share conversation and learn about each other. It's a very social event. Cooked lunch will comply with our health and nutrition requirements and our environmental awareness of packaging. We will use fresh produce from our garden where possible, other fresh produce purchased locally if possible and use pre-packaged goods only where necessary. All children will be asked to at least try something from the cooked lunch range of options which will include a deconstructed salad and something more substantial which has been cooked that day. Waste will be either composted, used in the worm farm or sent home to be fed to chooks or pigs.

### **Water**

Children are to only drink water while they are at school. They are encouraged and able to access water at all times of the day, including during PE/sport. Sweet drinks are not permitted.

Parents are asked to:

- send a named non-breakable cup or drink-bottle to keep at school for drinking water
- send plenty of drinking water in a named drink bottle for Environment Days, Bike Days and school camps.

## **Environmental Awareness and Food Sustainability**

Students will be educated about the environmental impacts of food production methods and of the various foods that we eat. We will promote food sustainability. We will compost food waste in a sustainable manner and in a way that students learn about the principles and value of composting and worm farming. Consistent with our commitment to environmental awareness, we aim to be a waste-free school which means no plastic wrap, foil, zip lock bags or pre-packaged food (yogurt tubes or tubs, muesli bars, sultana boxes, crisps etc).

## Allergy Awareness

We are an allergy aware school. We take allergies seriously and understand the critical need to manage this risk effectively. For further information see the school's [Anaphylaxis Management Policy](#) and staff will use the Allergies, Illness, Injury & Immunisation Policy.

More specifically, we are a peanut/nut aware school. This means you are being asked by the school to consider peanut/nut alternatives for individual student lunches and snacks out of consideration when we have staff or children enrolled with severe, life-threatening allergies. If there is a child with a severe peanut/nut allergy in a class the staff and students in that class will be asked not to bring any peanut/nut products to school, even for private consumption. Parents will be made aware if this situation exists in a class.

- 1) Peanuts/nuts are permitted in individual school lunches if there is no particular child or staff member in that class who is allergic to peanuts/nuts.
- 2) If peanuts/nuts are included, parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is aware that they must contain it within their lunchbox, wash hands and face after consumption, not share, ask assistance to wipe surfaces, pick up any dropped nuts and dispose of them responsibly.
- 3) Peanuts/nuts are not permitted in food to be shared, distributed or used in curriculum activities- food brought to share or distribute on camps or at Garden Market must not have any peanut or nut ingredients, including peanut/nut oils or peanut/nut flour.
- 4) Peanuts/nuts are also not permitted if there is a child with an allergy in your child's class or camp or Environment Day group.

While we can never entirely enforce or regulate what comes from home in each child's lunch box, nor where foods contain traces of nuts or nut oil, we expect staff and families will assist in working towards minimising the risks and looking at alternatives to nut products.

All of the above applies to management of dairy allergies and may apply to management of other specific allergies as necessary.

We encourage parents/carers of children with allergies to teach their child about their allergy and help them understand which foods they can't eat and why. This includes education surrounding not sharing foods with their friend even if their friend is happy to.

As our student and staff population changes each year with new enrolments, there may be different allergies present in our community in different years. Common food allergies are reactions to peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, eggs or seafood. As this occurs, individual classes will be educated to be aware of their fellow students and how they can reduce risks: ie choosing alternate foods, handwashing techniques if allergy foods are consumed, etc.

## **Flexibility**

Staff will always aim to assist students to comply fully with this food policy, however, we recognise that there may be individual students with particular medical (physical or psychological) or behavioural needs where we may need to extend some flexibility while still trying to educate the child and their family about healthy eating habits and educating the children and their parents about why some students need this flexibility.

Parents who want this flexibility for their child must talk with their child's teacher to make suitable arrangements.

Parents may be asked to provide suitable foods at camps for students with particular needs.

## **More Information**

For more information on nutrition refer to, Australian  
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>