



Subject: ELC, OSHC AND KINDERGARTEN NUTRITION POLICY	Policy No: ELC 15 – Version 3
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Nutrition

Policy

A child's early years are the most important in establishing lifelong eating patterns.

Children require access to regular, healthy meals, snacks and drinks to support their overall growth and development. The term 'nutrition' describes how food meets the body's dietary requirements.

Good nutrition as the foundation for good health requires an adequate, well balanced diet combined with regular physical activity. Poor nutrition can lead to reduced immunity, increased susceptibility to disease, childhood obesity, impaired physical and mental development, and reduced productivity. (World Health Organisation, 2010).

St Michaels Collegiate School, nominated supervisors, teachers, educators, staff and volunteers of Collegiate Early Learning (ELC), Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and St Michaels Collegiate Kindergarten will implement health and hygiene practices to support the nutritional and dietary requirements of children.

Safe practices regarding the handling, preparation and storage of food will be implemented to minimise any associated risks.

Food awareness experiences will be included in the curriculum to support and extend each child's and parent's understanding and knowledge related to healthy food options and experiences.

To support the nutritional information shared with families, where meals are provided, a weekly menu that accurately describes the food and beverages (other than water) provided to children will be clearly displayed.

Procedure

In offering a holistic and interactive curriculum, a focus on nutrition, inclusion and life skills is celebrated.

Meal times, snacks and cooking or kitchen based experiences will be reflective of the children, families, educators, teaching staff and wider community; including reflecting the cultural, religious or health requirements of the children, families, teaching staff or wider community. Consideration will also be given to sustainability practices, including limiting waste, nutrition and the inclusion of celebrations. A safe, supportive and inclusive environment will be maintained at all times.

Meal times, snacks and cooking/kitchen based experiences will be respectful, age and developmentally appropriate and positively support each child's sense of well-being and current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests.

Where children engage in meal times, snacks, cooking or kitchen based experiences, children will be actively and closely supervised and supported. This may be facilitated through:

- Small group experiences;
- Teacher and educator's understanding of group dynamics;
- The implementation of relevant risk minimisation strategies, including minimising hazards and known food based allergens within the environment:
- Offering children the opportunity to engage in independent exploration and appropriate risk taking;
- Provide opportunities for children to make responsible, supported and genuine decisions about their engagement.

Refer to the Interactions with Children Policy and Procedure for further details in regard to children's agency and supervision.

Meal times and cooking experiences will be used as an opportunity for teachers and educators to engage with children and students to:

- Provide opportunities to experience a range of nutritious food and to learn about healthy food choices;
- Extend children's understandings of healthy food and nutrition in line with the Australian Government Guidelines Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood, and the Australian Dietary Guidelines;
- Engage in experiences, conversations and routines that promote relaxed and enjoyable mealtimes and promote healthy, balanced lifestyles (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p. 32; *Framework for School Age Care*, p. 31);
- Encourage children to eat healthy food without requiring them to eat food they don't like or to eat more than they need, including supporting children to recognise when they are hungry, thirsty or 'full';
- Role model positive relationships with food;
- Model, implement and positively reinforce healthy eating and nutrition practices, as well as safe eating practices (e.g. sitting with children and students during meal times).

Children (in an age and developmentally appropriate manner), families and staff will be consulted in regard to meal time needs and routines, including menu development, shopping lists and engagement with the kitchen garden and nutritional and dietary needs.

A safe and supportive environment will be provided to children during meal times, including children being encouraged to be seated when eating (i.e. during meal times¹).

Furniture, seating arrangements, cooking utensils and cooking appliances will be maintained and used to ensure that they do not present an unacceptable risk to children, including minimising cross contamination and known allergens within the environment (refer to *Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services* for further details).

Food and drinks offered to children will be safe, hygienic, contain no known allergens and will be provided at a safe temperature (refer to *Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian*

Education and Care Services for further details). Food will be handled and stored in a safe and hygienic manner.

Children and students must have access to safe drinking water at all times they are attending the School and service, in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

Food will never be used as a reward or punishment.

Where food and beverages (other than water) are provided to children and students, a weekly menu that accurately describes the food and beverages must be clearly displayed at the service. The weekly menu will be planned to ensure maximum nutrition from a variety of healthy food options; including fruits and vegetables.

Preparing and Serving food

Where food and beverages are provided by Collegiate ELC, OSHC or St Michael's Collegiate Kindergarten, they will be nutritious and adequate in quantity, with regard being given to the dietary requirements of individual children, including any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.

When preparing, handling, serving or eating food, educators, teachers and children will:

- Wash hands before preparing food;
- Use only clean and sanitised equipment;
- Inspect equipment and utensils regularly to ensure they are clean (replace or repair equipment as required) and are maintained in good working order;
- Regularly review food handling practices, cleaning schedules and practices;
- Ready-to-eat food should not be touched with bare hands. Tongs, utensils, gloves or an equivalent should be used;
- Children will be encouraged to use tongs when serving themselves from shared food platters. Educators will support children in the development and extension of relevant self-help skills;
- Pre-prepared food must be stored in a safe and hygienic manner (e.g. covered, refrigerated);
- Food preparation areas (i.e. benches) must be kept clean and tidy at all times, including being clear of clutter, debris and food scraps;
- Food scraps will be hygienically collected and stored (A clearly named and lidded bin. Food scrap bins must be emptied regularly and wiped out or washed between uses). Food scraps may be used for worm or chicken food, composting or recycling;
- To prevent cross contamination:
 - Separate chopping boards, utensils and equipment must be used for ready-to-eat and raw food;
 - Work spaces and equipment must be washed and sanitised between the preparation of raw and ready-to-eat foods;
 - Contaminated food must be discarded;
- When preparing and washing fruit and vegetables, it is best practice to use a sink that is designated to this task or has been washed and sanitised before use to prevent cross contamination. Alternatively, a colander may be used;

To support supervision and children's self-help skills and engagement, at ELC, children will be encouraged to safely place their used plates, bowls and utensils in the

designated basket. Once all plates, bowls and utensils have been collected, an educator will take the basket to the kitchen for cleaning (As ratios and supervision allows, plates, bowls and utensils will be washed in the ELC dishwasher).

Where food is stored in the refrigerator while in an insulated lunch box, the food will be either removed or the lid unzipped, as the cold air will be unable to circulate around the food. Where a refrigerator is not available, the parent will be requested to send the food in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack. Parents will also be requested to label the food with their child's name.

When reheating food sent from home, educators will reheat the food until the food is steaming and hot throughout; food must be allowed to cool before serving it to children.

Hot drinks must be consumed away from areas that are accessible to children.

Food Allergens

Parents must notify Collegiate ELC, OSHC and St Michael's Collegiate Kindergarten on enrolment (or at other additional time) of any known and diagnosed food allergens in relation to their child.

Appropriate strategies will be implemented to protect children (and others) from known allergens. Known allergens may include but are not limited to:

- Nuts;
- Eggs;
- Dairy;
- Sesame seeds;
- Gluten.

Appropriate strategies must be included in the child's Risk Minimisation Plans, must be implemented and may include:

- Teachers, educators and staff being trained in relevant food handling practices. Suitable training may include completing the online *I'm Alert Food Safety Training* or training offered through Anaphylaxis Australia. Certificates must be stored with the staff record;
- Children with known and diagnosed food allergies must have completed a current Medical Management Plan and Risk Minimisation Plan (in line with the Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure). All teachers, educators and volunteers must be aware of the Plans and their implementation requirements;
- The requirements of children with special dietary needs (e.g. cultural) must be known and implemented by teachers, educators and volunteers;
- Ensure utensils, equipment and work areas are cleaned and sanitised before preparing allergen-free food. *Where possible use separate areas for the storage, preparation and service of allergen-free foods.*

Cleaning Practices

To support the provision of a clean, safe and hygienic environment, it is important to teachers, educators, staff and volunteers use a 'clean as you go' approach, rather than relying on cleaning processes at only the beginning or end of the day.

Areas and items that may be included in your cleaning regime:

- Benches, sinks, floors and walls;
- Equipment and utensils that come into direct contact with food (e.g. cutlery, knives, chopping boards, food containers); and
- Food storage areas (e.g. pantry, inside of refrigerator, waste food areas).

It is important to remember that cleaning and sanitising are different. Cleaning is the removal of visible dirt and grease, whereas sanitising is the process of killing bacteria. It is essential that items are cleaned prior to being sanitised. To sanitise specific equipment or an area:

- Clean to remove visible dirt and food debris;
- Wash with hot, soapy water;
- Sanitise by following the manufacturer's instructions (for smaller items, sanitise in a sink or large container; for larger items, spray sanitiser onto item) and
- Leave to air dry.

A commercial dishwasher, a domestic dishwasher (with a sanitising cycle), or an appropriate food grade chemical sanitiser (always follow the manufacturer's instructions) may also be used to sanitise equipment.

Only sanitisers and cleaning chemicals suitable for use where food is prepared may be used at Collegiate ELC, OSHC and St Michael's Collegiate Kindergarten.

Cleaning cloths and cleaning equipment must be replaced and updated to maintain a hygienic environment (refer to Provision of a Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure).

Teaching Experiences That Include Food

As outlined above, the inclusion of cooking and food preparation may be used to facilitate and extend each child's learning and development; with children's ideas, interests and learning focuses the basis of each experience.

Children will be supervised at all times when engaged in kitchen based and/or food preparation experiences.

Hygiene practices that reflect current research and advice from recognised health authorities (e.g. Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services) will be implemented; including but not limited to hand hygiene, cleaning practices and food handling, storage and preparation.

Age and developmentally appropriate equipment will be available to support each child's inclusion in cooking and food preparation experiences.

Cooking experiences will be used to support each child's connection and their engagement to their community, their culture, needs, interest and ideas and to support each child's sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Hazards such as knives (i.e. carving knives), cleaning products and chemicals will be stored and maintained as inaccessible to children (Refer to Provision of a Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure for further details). Under supervision, children may have access to age/developmentally appropriate knives (and other equipment) to support and extend life skills and their engagement in the program and curriculum.

Children will be encouraged to wash their hands before engaging in an experience that includes food (this includes meal times).

Where food is prepared and cooked as part of the program and curriculum:

- The food must be prepared and stored in a hygienic manner;
- Consideration must be given to:
 - nutrition;
 - supervision;
 - children's safety and engagement;
 - known and diagnosed allergens;
 - cultural and religious requirements.

Food must be cooked properly to kill any disease-causing microorganisms and must be served and stored in a hygienic manner.

Where possible, kitchen facilities will be used in teaching experiences that include food.

Celebrations

Birthdays, other special celebrations and milestones provide us with an opportunity to honor and pay tribute to the important life moments experienced by the individuals within our learning community.

To support an inclusive community, at Collegiate ELC, OSHC and Kindergarten we offer a rich program that is holistic, culturally diverse and fosters a positive sense of identity (Philosophy, 2018-2019); celebrating and acknowledging these moments, while maintaining and embedding a focus on health, well-being and nutrition.

While families, children and staff are more than welcome to celebrate through food (e.g. a healthy platter; slice; cake), we also understand the importance of nutrition and offering children, families the opportunity to celebrate in many ways. Times of celebrations may also focus on the important and vital aspects of our lives, our sense of belonging and connection to others as we honour who we are together and as individuals; For example, to support a richer and inclusive focus in celebrating special events and milestones at Collegiate ELC and OSHC we offer children and staff a variety of opportunities to celebrate:

- Wearing of a Birthday Cape;
- Wearing of a Birthday Crown;
- Celebrating with the 'wooden' birthday cake;
- Celebration songs;
- Sharing a special birthday story;
- Celebrating the uniqueness of each individual;
- A time to explore how others celebrate and build connections.

Where food is bought along to share, we ask that people are mindful of:

- Our allergy awareness status;
- Children's dietary requirements; and
- Include a clear list of ingredients and the date that the item has been made.

Please note: *Staying Healthy* (5th Edition) suggests that if a candle has been supplied for the child to blow out while their friends sing 'Happy Birthday', to prevent the spread of germs, parents provide a separate cupcake for the birthday child.

Relevant Policies and Procedures

- Administration of First Aid Policy and Procedure
- Enrolment and Orientation Policy and Procedure
- Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure
- Provision of a Child Safe Environment Policy and Procedure

Sources

- *Education and Care Services National Law*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*
- *Food Act 2003*
- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Food Safety Manual for Tasmanian Education and Care Services*
- <https://www.echr.edu.au/docs/default-source/resources/ipsp/promoting-healthy-eating-in-education-and-care-services.pdf?sfvrsn=12>
- Anaphylaxis Australia

¹ Being seated at meal times does not only include a child being safely seated at a table. Dependant on the needs, age or development of the individual child, other safe and hygienic spaces may be offered. This may include but is not limited to a picnic in the environment as part of the curriculum.