



# Nutrition, Food & Nut Aware Policy

Our School recognises the importance of healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Our School therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We support and promote the NSW Health initiative *Munch & Move* and utilise

## Education and Care Schools National Regulations

Children (Education and Care Schools) National Law NSW	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	School providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care School must have policies and procedures

## PURPOSE

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) Schools are required by legislation to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that our School partners with families to provide education about nutrition, and promote healthy eating habits for young children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with adult chronic conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The Farmhouse recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development and wellbeing of young children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined in the NSW Health's *Munch & Move* program into our curriculum and to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, and management of the School.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Our School has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

All food prepared by the School or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients. [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/n55\\_australian\\_dietary\\_guidelines.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/n55_australian_dietary_guidelines.pdf)

Meal times reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. When possible, educators will role model healthy eating behaviour, by sharing the lunch time experience. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

**Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.**

### **OUR SCHOOL WILL:**

#### **Where food is provided by the School:**

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products etc.
- Plan healthy snacks on the menu to complement what is sent by the parent for lunch time and ensure the snacks are substantial enough to meet the energy and nutrient needs of children.
- Vary the snacks to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.

#### **Where food is brought from home:**

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, muesli bars, breakfast bars, fruit filled bars, chips, oven-baked crackers and corn chips.

#### **Management/Nominated Supervisor/Educators will:**

- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans.
- Ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Ensure all children are always supervised while eating and drinking.
- Encourage and provide opportunities educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition.
- Ensure age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture will be provided for each child.
- Encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at meal times.
- Establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program.
- Talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating.
- Encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes.
- Ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are taken daily, working in compliance with the National Food Authority.

#### **Storing, preparing and serving food in a hygienic manner promoting hygienic food practices.**

Our School will:

- Ensure gloves (or food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods
- Ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, warm running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks.
- Ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures i.e. below 5°C or above 60°C.
- Separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods.
- Discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information onto the rest of the staff.

#### **Creating a positive learning environment**

Our School will:

- Ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided.
- Choose water as a preferred drink
- Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Encourage older toddlers and preschoolers to assist to set and clear the table and serve their own food and drink - providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.

- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat.
- Do not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

### School Program

Our School will:

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.
- Encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.
- Embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences

### Communicating with families

Our School will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Policy to all families upon orientation at the School.
- Provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of the policy.
- Request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the School and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the School and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.

### Our Nut-Aware Policy

Although we recognise that this cannot be guaranteed, The Farmhouse Montessori School' aims to be a Nut-Aware school. This section of the policy serves to set out all measures to reduce the risk to those children and adults who may suffer an anaphylactic reaction if exposed to nuts to which they are sensitive. The school aims to protect children who have allergies to nuts yet also help them, as they grow up, to take responsibility as to what foods they can eat and to be aware of where they may be put at risk. We do not allow nuts or nut products in school lunch boxes.

Our "Nut-Aware Policy" means that the following items should not be brought into school:

- Packs of nuts
- Peanut butter sandwiches
- Fruit and cereal bars that contain nuts
- Chocolate bars or sweets that contain nuts
- Sesame seed rolls (children allergic to nuts may also have a severe reaction to sesame)
- Cakes made with nuts

We have a policy to not use nuts in any of our food prepared on site at our school. When we purchase food items for the school we buy items listed as Nut Free. However, we cannot guarantee freedom from nut traces.

### Food allergies and Anaphylaxis – INFORMATION FOR SCHOOLS "May contain statement"

*This information has been developed collaboratively by the NSW Department of Education and Communities, NSW Department of Health, the Catholic Education Commission of NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.*

#### **What does the 'may contain' statement mean on food packaging and is it safe to have these products in school?**

*The 'may contain' statement is voluntary information provided by the manufacturer in order to inform the consumer that the product may have been inadvertently contaminated during the manufacturing process. It does not necessarily mean that the product will contain the allergen (this information is on the ingredient list). Some children who are at risk of anaphylaxis eat the products that have the 'may contain' statement while others do not. Products with the 'may contain' statement do not need to be removed from the school or the school canteen.*

### Definition

Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal. Anaphylaxis is your body's immune system reacting badly to a substance (an allergen), such as food, which it wrongly perceives as a threat. The whole body can be affected, usually within minutes of contact with an allergen, although sometimes the reaction can happen hours later.

### Staff

Staff and volunteers must ensure they do not bring in or consume nut products in school and ensure they follow good hand washing practice.

- Caution must be taken at certain times of year such as Easter and Christmas. If Staff distribute confectionary, care must be taken to ensure that no nuts are included in the product. Fruit sweets such as Haribo are a better alternative. Particular products that are a cause for concern are: - Celebrations – Roses – Heroes – Quality Street.

All product packaging must be checked for warnings directed at nut allergy sufferers and if the following or similar are displayed, the product must not be used in school. Packaging must be checked for:

- Not suitable for nut allergy sufferers;
- This product contains nuts;
- This product may contain traces nuts;
- Indicating this is unsuitable for school consumption.

Epi Pen trained staff are named First Aiders. Please check the school office, medical room and the Staffroom noticeboard for a list of qualified staff.

### Parents and Carers

Parents and carers must notify staff of any known or suspected allergy to nuts and provide all medical and necessary information. This will be added to the child's care plan and if necessary a meeting organised with the school nurse. Homemade snacks or party food contributions must have a label detailing all ingredients present and the kitchen environment where the food was prepared must be Nut Aware. If you are unsure about a selection please speak to a staff member before bringing the food item into school.

The school requests that parents and carers observe the Nut Aware policy and therefore **do not** include nuts, or any traces of nuts, in packed lunches.

### Children

All children are regularly reminded about the good hygiene practice of washing hands before and after eating which helps to reduce the risk of secondary contamination. Likewise children are reminded and carefully supervised to minimise the act of food sharing with their friends.

### Health Plans and Emergency Response

We have individual Healthcare plans for children with allergies and Allergy Lists are displayed highlighting Healthcare plans in place, triggers, medication (Medication will be stored, administered and documented in accordance with our Administering Medicine Policy).

### Symptoms

The symptoms of anaphylaxis usually start between three and sixty minutes after contact with the allergen. Less commonly they can occur a few hours or even days after contact.

An anaphylactic reaction may lead to feeling unwell or dizzy or may cause fainting due to a sudden drop in blood pressure. Narrowing of the airways can also occur at the same time, with or without the drop in blood pressure. This can cause breathing difficulties and wheezing.

### Other symptoms:

- Swollen eyes, lips, genitals, hands, feet and other areas (this is called angioedema)
- Itching
- Sore, red, itchy eyes
- Changes in heart rate
- A sudden feeling of extreme anxiety or apprehension
- Itchy skin or nettle-rash (hives)
- Unconsciousness due to very low blood pressure
- Abdominal cramps, vomiting or diarrhoea, or nausea and fever.

Anaphylaxis varies in severity. Sometimes it causes only mild itchiness and swelling, but in some people it can cause sudden death. If symptoms start soon after reaction with the allergen and rapidly worsens, this indicates that the reaction is more severe.

### Source

- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Guide to the Education and Care Schools National Law and the Education and Care Schools National Regulations 2015
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- Safe Food Australia, 2nd Edition. January 2001
- Food Safety Standards for Australia 2001
- Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Munch and Move- NSW Health initiative
- Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis Information: Department of Health, NSW Department of Education and Communities, the Catholic Education Commission of NSW and the Association of Independent Schools of NSW.

**Review**

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
		November 2018