Purpose
Our Lady Star of the Sea School acknowledges the importance of healthy eating and oral health behaviours, which contribute to good health and overall well-being, and the capacity of students to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

This policy confirms our commitment to:

• encouraging students to make healthy and informed food and drink choices
• promoting the importance of a healthy lifestyle, which includes drinking water, eating healthy food and maintaining oral health
• developing an understanding of how food provides nutrients for energy and growth and how to select food to promote health and growth.
• creating a supportive environment for healthy eating and good oral health for students, staff, families.

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 adult member of Our Lady Star of the Sea 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: Eating a wide variety of foods from the five food groups each day. 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: Everyone needs food to provide the right balance of vitamins, minerals and nutrients (like protein, carbohydrate and fats) to feel energised and to help them grow and stay healthy. The meals we eat and the drinks we drink satisfy hunger and thirst throughout the day as well as fuel the body. Preparing and sharing meals with friends, family or community is a significant way to build relationships and is an important part of our culture.

‘Occasional’ foods and drink: Also referred to as ‘extra foods’ or ‘discretionary foods’ (sometimes called junk food), these are foods like potato chips, chocolate, cakes, lollies, soft drinks and some takeaway food like hamburgers and hotdogs. These foods are usually low in nutrients and high in salt, sugar or fat.³

‘Select carefully’ foods and drink: Include foods like commercially prepared pastas, noodles and soups, meat products and fruit juice.

‘Everyday’ foods and drink: Include whole foods such as fresh fruit, wholegrain breads and cereals, lean cuts of meat, legumes, canteen made soups, reduced fat dairy products and water.

Oral health: Defined as ‘eating, speaking and socialising without pain, discomfort or embarrassment’.⁴
Procedures

Healthy policies
- This policy is consistent with the School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy and Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Staff, families and students are involved in the development and implementation of the whole school healthy eating and oral health policies 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.

Healthy physical environment
- The school canteen menu is assessed by the Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service as compliant with the School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy. The school canteen classifies food as “Everyday, Sometimes or Occasional” food, increasing the availability of ‘Everyday’ foods. The canteen does not provide sweet drinks.
- Students will have access to their own water bottles during class lessons and be given a Fruit and Vegie Break each morning.
- A representative of the Student Wellbeing Core Team will have the responsibility to promote the Healthy Eating Policy to class initiatives and activities.
- Lessons relating to healthy food and healthy eating will be incorporated into relevant inquiry learning units. This should include guest speakers, local produce growing, information on newsletters and the like.
- Food provided at camps, school excursions and sports days are in line with the School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy.
- Families are encouraged to provide healthy lunchboxes and support our “nude food” policy.
- Staff are encouraged to model healthy eating and drinking habits. Healthy food options are encouraged at meetings, professional learning events and in the staff room.
- Safe drinking water is available at all times and only water bottles filled with water are to be accessed during class.
- Sweet drinks are not permitted during class time.
- The school seeks to ensure any sponsorship, advertisements or marketing of food and drinks is consistent with the school’s Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy.
- Fundraising activities reflect the Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy and promote healthy lifestyle messages. We do however acknowledge that a “Sometimes or Occasional” food can be included within modest limits, for example sausage sizzles, fetes, sweet drinks.
- To reflect increases of food-related allergies and danger of adverse reactions or even anaphylaxis shock in children, we encourage parents and students to adhere to our “no share” policy with food.
- Students are encouraged to undertake oral hygiene practices where appropriate, including undertaking safety practices to prevent against dental injuries, such as using mouth guards while participating in sport.
- The school will provide information to staff and in the first aid area on what to do in the event of a dental injury, i.e. when a tooth is knocked out.

Healthy social environment
- “Sometimes” food and drink may be used as an incentive or reward once a term with a class or two. eg Gotcha Award sausage sizzle.
- Students are given adequate time to eat their food in suitable and inviting eating spaces, which encourage the social interaction of students.
- To support positive role modelling, staff and families are encouraged to have food and drinks which are in line with the school’s healthy eating policy.
- Staff and families are encouraged to foster a healthy body image and enjoyment of eating.
- The school respects and celebrates the cultural diversity of its community through recognising and valuing cultural and traditional beliefs about food and oral health.

Learning and skills
- Healthy eating and oral health are incorporated into the curriculum, across multiple key learning areas.
- Students have the opportunity to engage in regular food-related activities, such as planning and shopping for meals, growing, cooking and eating foods, which are culturally appropriate and varied.
- Teachers will discuss tooth brushing practices and why they are important with students.
- Staff are supported to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to promote healthy eating and oral health across the curriculum.
Engaging children, young people, staff and families

- Students are consulted about healthy eating and oral health initiatives via house leaders.
- Families and staff are, provided with information, ideas and practical strategies to promote and support healthy eating and oral health.
- Families are encouraged to be involved in healthy eating and oral health initiatives at school.
- Families and students from culturally diverse backgrounds are engaged to ensure cultural values and expectations about food, eating and oral health are respected.
- Important key oral health messages in ‘Oral Health messages for the Australian public’ should be emphasised to families.

Community partnerships

- The school will work with local health professionals, services, businesses or agencies, where possible, to support staff, students and families to promote healthy eating. This may include, but not be limited to agencies such as Bellarine Community Health Dietician and Dental Services.

Relevant accountability documents

- DEECD School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy
- National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Dietary Guidelines
- DEECD School Policy and Advisory Guide – Health Education Approaches
- Oral Health Messages for the Australian Public

Related school policies

- Canteen Policy
- Physical Activity Policy
- Anaphylaxis/Food Allergies Policy
- School Camp Policy
- Staff Health and Wellbeing Policy

References

3. DEECD 2012 School Canteen and other School Food Services Policy

Monitoring and review

The Healthy Eating and Oral Health Policy will be monitored and reviewed by the staff, school education board and the Student Wellbeing Core Team at least once every three years.

Ratified by the School Education Board 9 March, 2016

Initial Policy: March 2016
Next Review: 2019