



HEALTHY EATING AND DRINKING

Related Merici Policies

Social Awareness and Fundraising Policy

Related Resources

Australian Dietary Guidelines – www.eatforhealth.gov.au

National Healthy School Canteens Guidelines – www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-nutrition-canteens

Healthy Schools Network ACT - www.healthyschoolsact.com.au/

Healthy Schools Campaign - www.healthyschoolscampaign.org/about/

Nutrition Australia:- www.nutritionaustralia.org/act

ACT Government: Fresh Tastes Healthy Food at School www.health.act.gov.au/health-services/population-health/health-improvement/health-promotion/healthy-children-and-young-people/fresh-tastes/

Rationale/Purpose

The human person, though made of body and soul, is a unity... The human body shares in the dignity of the image of God: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit (Catechism of the Catholic Church para 364).

Merici College strives to be a place where children are nurtured and nourished at every level – emotionally, spiritually, socially, academically and physically. This means that the food offered to the children through the school community needs to be nutritious, nourishing and sustaining. Schools are in a unique position to reinforce and send powerful healthy eating messages to children that will assist them in making positive lifestyle choices. As Merici College moves towards a healthier environment for our students and strives to be more sustainable in our practices, we need to set an example with all catering whether it is for staff, parents or students.

A healthy lifestyle is vital to good health at all stages of life but especially in childhood through to adolescence. Children develop lifestyle habits that can last a lifetime. It is also at this stage that major growth and development occurs, to which nutrition and a well-balanced diet is fundamental. Concern has mounted recently in Australia over the poor food choices and eating habits of children and adolescents. Research statistics widely reported in the media have raised alarm over the growing obesity problem of the Australian population and in particular children and young people.

Research shows students learn better when they're well-nourished. Healthy eating has been linked to higher grades, better memory, more alertness, faster information processing and improved health, leading to better school attendance. Food choices also have a significant impact on the environment through the associated carbon dioxide emissions, food waste and packaging. Merici College endeavours to provide an environment that will have a positive impact on nutritional health and promote a healthy, sustainable lifestyle in our students, staff and parents.

Definitions

Always Foods:

These are often known as whole foods; food that is reasonably intact and unprocessed such as vegetables, whole grains, legumes, dairy, eggs and fruit. They are as close to their natural state as possible and ideally free from artificial additives and preservatives. They are dense in nutrients, create steady supplies of energy and providing lasting satisfaction.

Sometimes Foods:

Often called junk food or treats, 'sometimes foods' are foods such as chocolate, lollies, soft drinks, sweetened juice drinks, fried food, potato chips, cakes and takeaway foods. They are usually high in calories/Kilojoules (Kj) yet low in nutrients and contain levels of sugar, fat and/or salt that are disproportionate to daily recommended allowances and lead to spikes and falls in energy levels and levels of concentration. Regular consumption of these foods often leads to overeating and subsequently the storage of excess calories/Kj as fat deposits on and within the body.

Policy

A health and nutrition Policy that covers the consumption of food and drink makes a positive statement to students, staff members, parents and the broader community about the value placed on human life, the environment and all of creation.

This Policy aims to provide:

- education about the importance of a healthy diet;
- increased levels of energy, concentration and performance in staff and students;
- a decrease in absenteeism in both staff and students;
- healthy canteen choices congruent with the nutrition knowledge taught in the classroom
- waste free food and beverage choices
- low carbon footprint food choices

This Policy aims to promote:

- positive attitudes towards healthy food choices;
- lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of obesity, tooth decay and the number of related diseases (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer);
- the financial benefits of regularly choosing healthy food options;
- a school culture of healthy eating that can extend into the wider family and community;
- a student's personal responsibility for decision making about healthy eating both now and in adult independence;
- an awareness of the links between nutrition, marketing, agricultural practices and the environment.

Procedures

In order to achieve these outcomes:

- students will be encouraged to have a water bottle accessible, where appropriate, allowing them to drink water throughout the day;
- parents will be encouraged and responsible to provide 'Waste Free' food healthy treats may be provided at school with the intention of eliminating extrinsic food incentives (ie. no lollies as rewards)
- students will receive explicit teaching about healthy food and nutrition as part of the Health and Food Technology and Hospitality curriculum;
all food at class and staff parties/morning teas will reflect a balance that is in favour of 'Always' foods vs 'Sometimes' foods
- all food consumed on camps, on excursions and in classes as part of the curriculum will endeavour to comply with the Healthy Eating/Drinking Policy, reflecting a balance that is in favour of 'Always' vs 'Sometimes' foods, where possible.
- the canteen menu will reflect a balance in favour of 'Always' vs 'Sometimes' foods.
- staff will be asked to model positive food choices and not provide soft drinks and lollies to students
- students and staff will be asked not to bring hot drinks, energy drinks, fast food or other take-away food to school due to the negative impact of the packaging on the environment and the unhealthy nature of the food.
- senior students will be asked to model positive food choices and are required to consume all fast food purchases off-campus.
- fundraising activities will seek to find creative alternatives to the use of food, or will assure that 'Sometimes' foods and drinks are avoided – see *Social Action and Fundraising Policy*
- raise the awareness and importance of healthy eating amongst students, staff and wider community at the College. This should be done through school curriculum, 'What's On' newsletter, intranet, canteen menus, classroom activities and other alternative forms of communication.
- the school will adhere to the Food Safety Acts
- student's urgent medical needs will be noted and addressed

Forms

Nil

Approved by: Merici Executive
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 Merici Contact Officer: Principal