

**Rationale:**

The educational mission of Bass Coast Specialist School is to improve the health of the school community by teaching students ways to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. This will be achieved through food education; skills such as cooking and growing food; the types of foods served in the school; and core academic content.

Current medical research states that good nutrition is critical for every child's short and long term health, including both their physical and cognitive development. Well-nourished children are likely to be more receptive to teaching resulting in improved learning. Healthy eating habits learnt during childhood are usually continued throughout life and these healthy behaviours can help to reduce the risk of diseases such as obesity, diabetes, iron deficiency, anaemia and dental caries throughout the lifecycle.

Schools are an ideal setting to promote good nutrition as they have been shown to have a positive impact on eating behaviours of young people (World Health Organisation, 1998).

It is Bass Coast Specialist School's aim to make healthy eating an easy and informed choice for the entire school community. Currently all Victorian state schools have adopted healthy eating practices such as eliminating non-nutritional drinks and foods from school canteens, reducing the types of processed foods available and encouraging healthy snack/lunch packs.

Bass Coast Specialist School aims to:

- make healthy eating an easy and informed choice for the entire school community
- ensure that students have every opportunity to access healthy food and to learn in an environment that supports healthy eating
- help students learn about healthy eating and living practices
- enable staff to promote healthy living and living practices
- Inform parents/guardians of the importance of healthy and living practices for students and families

**Policy Statement:**

Staff recognise the importance of the school experience for students and families in introducing and building the foundations of positive nutritional eating habits that can be carried through to later years and throughout life. The staff recognise that the school is a community role model for the practices of 'Healthy Eating' and 'Healthy Living'.

The Healthy Eating Policy reflects the following concepts, to:

- promote a child's normal growth and development
  - promote appropriate food choices and physical activity
  - annually review students' physical growth
- (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2003)

The Healthy Eating Policy is consistent with the current 'Dietary Guidelines for Students and Adolescents in Australia' (2003). The menu should reflect a wide variety of nutritious foods, such as:

- plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
- cereals (preferably wholegrain), which include breads, rice, pasta and noodles
- lean meats, poultry and fish (or protein alternatives)
- dairy products, which includes milk, cheese, yoghurts
- plenty of opportunity to drink water
- foods containing calcium and iron, and low in salt
- moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars or artificial sweeteners

The school is committed to:

- Educating students and their parents/guardians about healthy food/drinks and healthy eating/drinking habits
- Ensuring the nutritional needs and/or dietary requirements of students is appropriately catered for while they are attending the school
- Respecting the diversity and cultural/religious backgrounds of families

As a health promoting school, we encourage parents to send simple, nutritious food to school (eg fruits and vegetables, cheese, salad sandwich, bottle of water or plain milk).

### **Implementation:**

- Promote the drinking of water as the first and best choice, including after physical activity
- Water bottles (filled with water only) allowed in class
- Restriction of sweet drinks in class
  
- Healthy snacks allowed in class and a fruit and vegetable break will be held each day. Parents are requested to send at least one piece of fruit or vegetable each day for this snack time
- Encouraging the provision of suitable foods which meet student's nutritional needs
- Students will be given opportunities to participate in food related activities, experiencing a variety of different foods
- Students bring their own lunches
- Growing food for consumption in class
- Students are requested to take home all uneaten food so that parents know if the quantity they are sending is too large or if the child does not like a particular food

- During the year, there may be special food days organised e.g. sausage sizzles, pizza lunch and cakes, on special occasions. Limits will be placed upon the provision of fried foods and chips
  - A diet low in fat and in particular, low in saturated fats is appropriate
  - Families will be informed about ‘Healthy Eating, Healthy Living’ throughout the year via newsletters, notices and handouts
  - On an occasional basis, the school will provide food that has been produced through food related activities involving the students
  - The school will provide up-to-date information to families about nutrition and encourage communication regarding specific cultural and religious needs
  - The school will ensure that the individual needs of students, especially those with food allergies, are respected
  - When students access the school lunch canteen Bass Coast Specialist School will encourage healthy eating options
  - Staff will assist students with selecting healthy food options for the students and families such as implementing healthy cooking activities, providing incursions such as the Life Education Program
  - When food is purchased during excursions, the students will be encouraged to buy healthy options
  - Staff and parents/guardians will ensure that foods and drinks on the premises will comply with special dietary requirements, restrictions and needs of all individuals at the school
  - Teachers will model healthy eating and support students to eat well inside and outside the classroom
  - Teachers will encourage all students to explore concepts of healthy foods/drinks and the effects of such on their growing bodies. This will be achieved via providing teaching aids, activities and discussions throughout the year, both formally as part of the curriculum in line with the AUSVels, and informally
  - Staff and parents/guardians will communicate and work collaboratively towards maintaining healthy eating/drinking practices for each student
  - Staff will organise supervised scheduled eating times
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- Parents/Guardians/Carers need to notify the school of any specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) for their child.
  - Parents/Guardians/Carers will be strongly encouraged to follow the guidelines and school’s ‘Healthy Eating Policy’ regarding food and drinks to be sent to the school with the child. This includes limiting and not sending unhealthy items such as chips, chocolate, lollies and sweet drinks in their child’s lunch box
  - Parents/Guardians/Carers are requested to send a water only bottle to school each day

- Staff are encouraged not to use sweets as rewards, encouragement or for comfort. Other tactics such as giving out stickers and badges will be tried first

### **Training**

The training needs of all staff in relation to understanding the cultural, religious, medical and/or ethical needs of the students attending the school will be reviewed and training/staff development organised if appropriate.

### **Exclusions to the Healthy Eating Policy**

Specific programs e.g. behavior modification

- Special occasions and celebrations
- Special needs of individual students determined by medical or paramedical staff
- Judgment calls made by staff where strictly adhering to the policy would be detrimental to the student's health or wellbeing.

### **Resources:**

- Australian Nutrition Foundation. (2005). *Nutrition Australia*. Retrieved February 27, 2007, from <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/Default.htm>
- Life education Unit
- Nutrition in Schools Advisory Service - Ph: 07 3257 4393 or email [gld@nutritionaustralia.org](mailto:gld@nutritionaustralia.org)
- [www.childrendisabilities.info/allergies/dietlearningbehavior1.html](http://www.childrendisabilities.info/allergies/dietlearningbehavior1.html)
- Anaphylaxis Australia - [www.allergyfacts.org.au/](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/)
- Australian Dental Association - [www.ada.org.au/](http://www.ada.org.au/)
- Diabetes Australia - [www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/home/index.htm](http://www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/home/index.htm)
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand - [www.foodstandards.gov.au/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/)
- National Heart Foundation Australia – [www.heartfoundation.com.au/](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au/)
- Nutrition Australia - [www.nutritionaustralia.org/](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/)
- Building a Healthy Active Australia, Healthy School Communities – [www.healthyactive.gov.au/](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/)

*Follow the 'publications' link on the above website to find **Healthy and Active School Communities Resource Kit**.*

- Active-Ate- [www.health.qld.gov.au/activeate](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/activeate)  
An interactive website with programs, games, resources and options for support in the area of nutrition and physical activity in schools. The website also includes useful information on healthy tuckshops
- Kids – 'Go for your life' Program. [www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/kids](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/kids)  
A school based program to enhance healthy eating and physical activity for junior school students