

Nutrition Policy

Purpose:	The purpose of this policy is to ensure that healthy eating is promoted at River School Early Childhood Centre.	
Scope:	Children attending the service, parents and employees, including full-time, part-time, permanent, fixed-term and casual employees, as well as contractors, volunteers and people undertaking work experience or vocational placements	
Status:	Draft	Supersedes: All previous nutrition policies
Authorised by:	Dee Farquharson	Date of Authorisation: 18 May 2022
References:	• Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 • Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 160, 162; 168(2)(a)(i); 170-172; 177; 181; 183-184 • National Quality Standard : QA2 – Standard 2.2.1 • Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood • Get Up and Grow Family Handbook • Australian Dietary Guidelines 1-5 • Australian Dietary Guidelines Summary • River School Early Childhood Centre Food Safety Procedures • River School Early Childhood Centre Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Health and Hygiene Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Enrolment & Orientation Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Work Health and Safety Policy • River School Early Childhood Centre Privacy Policy • Munch and Move Manual • Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991 • Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Regulations 1994	
Review Date:	Annually	Next Review Date: 18 May 2023
Policy Owner:	AMEL Board	

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Policy Statement

River School Early Childhood Centre recognises that good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. River School Early Childhood Centre is committed to the Guidelines in both *Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*.

It is the policy of River School Early Childhood Centre to take the following reasonable steps to help promote and support health eating at the service:

- Families are encouraged to send nutritious, sentient vegetarian food, and include a variety of foods from each of the basic food groups. Parents are discouraged from including 'discretionary choices' in lunchboxes;
- Families are provided with information and ideas on how to provide nutritious foods for their children and about the importance of good nutrition and healthy eating for children, consistent with *Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia*;
- Advice is sought from parents regarding children's dietary requirements, including likes, dislikes, allergies, cultural or religious practices, or any other requirements, upon enrolment at the service. Parents are encouraged to keep this advice up to date;
- Water is offered as the only drink and is available at the service at all times;
- Food is never used as a reward or denied as a punishment;
- Mealtimes are positive, relaxed and social;
- Meals and snacks are offered at the child's discretion or at regular and predictable intervals;
- Children have control over their own choice to eat and the amount they eat;
- Extra food is available if children are still hungry at the end of a meal or snack;
- Food is seen as important for a healthy body, and not related to weight or body shape;
- Fussy eating is dealt with in a relaxed way that encourages the child to try new foods, but does not use praise or rewards for eating;
- Employees model, reinforce and implement healthy eating behaviours by sitting with children at mealtimes and interacting with them;
- Special occasions are recognised and celebrated with limited use of 'discretionary choices'. Alternatives to focusing on food are considered for celebrations; and
- Food and drinks are safely stored, in accordance with River School Early Childhood Centre's Food Safety Procedures.

Definitions

- **Sentient Vegetarianism** - is a diet that refrains from consuming the meat of any animal (poultry, red meat, fish, seafood, or any other animal that was killed for its meat), and in the case of the River School Early Childhood Centre, includes eggs).
- **Discretionary choices** - are foods not included in the basic food groups. Discretionary choices are foods high in kilojoules, saturated fat, added sugars and/or salt. They typically have very little nutritional value and are often processed and packaged

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- **Healthy eating** - eating a wide variety of nutritious foods in balanced proportions, and consuming an amount of food and drink to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight

Summary of guidelines and recommendations

Australian Dietary Guidelines

Guideline 1	To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs. Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.
Guideline 2	Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day: plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans, fruit, grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley, lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans, milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of two years). And drink plenty of water.
Guideline 3	Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt and added sugars. a) Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks. Replace high fat foods which contain predominantly saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado. Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of two years. b) Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt. Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods. Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table. c) Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.
Guideline 4	Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.
Guideline 5	Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.

Responsibilities

River School Early Childhood Centre has the following role and responsibilities:

- Encourage parents to send a range of nutritious food, and discourage the inclusion of 'discretionary choices' in lunchboxes;
- Regularly provide families with information and ideas on how to provide nutritious foods for their children and about the importance of good nutrition and healthy eating for children;

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- Upon enrolment and regularly thereafter, seek advice from parents regarding children's dietary requirements;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of children's dietary requirements;
- Ensure that water is available to children at all times, and offer it as the main drink;
- Offer meals and snacks at regular and predictable intervals;
- Never use food as a reward or punishment;
- Ensure that mealtimes are positive, relaxed and social;
- Ensure that children have control over their own choice to eat and the amount they eat;
- Offer the option of additional food from their lunchbox if children are still hungry at the end of a meal or snack;
- Discuss healthy eating choices with children, and communicate the message to children that food is important for a healthy body, and not relating it to weight or body shape;
- Manage fussy eating in a relaxed way that encourages the child to try new foods, but does not use praise or rewards for eating;
- Recognise and celebrate special occasions with limited use of 'discretionary choices', and consider alternatives to focusing on food for celebrations;
- Ensure that food and drinks are safely stored, in accordance with River School Early Childhood Centre's Food Safety Procedures; and
- Ensure measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes.

Employees

Employees of River School Early Childhood Centre have the following role and responsibilities:

- Be aware of and act in accordance with River School Early Childhood Centre Nutrition Policy and Food Safety Procedures; and
- Model, reinforce and implement healthy eating behaviours by sitting with children at mealtimes and interacting with them.

Families

Families of River School Early Childhood Centre have the following role and responsibilities:

- Be aware of and act in accordance with this Policy and the Food Safety Procedure;
- Provide details of specific nutritional/dietary requirements, including the need to accommodate cultural or religious practices or food allergies, on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the River School Early Childhood Centre prior to the child's commencement at the service, and if requirements change over time;
- Communicate regularly with staff regarding children's specific nutritional requirements and dietary needs, including food preferences;
- Provide healthy, nutritious food for snacks/meals; and
- If applicable, provide nutritious food and drinks for celebrations, fundraising activities and service events, consistent with service policy.

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Implementation

River School Early Childhood Centre will implement the following measures in order to promote healthy eating:

- Awareness: the service will regularly raise awareness of healthy eating, including by the development and implementation of this Policy and Food Safety Procedures and via the clear support and promotion of this Policy;
- Training: the service will provide employees with appropriate education on their responsibilities regarding the promotion of healthy eating and food safety.
- Record keeping, monitoring, reporting: the service will ensure that dietary information on enrolment records for relevant children is maintained and updated, and in line with the service's Privacy and Record Retention Policies.

Compliance and Monitoring

In line with the *Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011*, River School Early Childhood Centre will ensure that:

- Copies of this policy and any related procedures are readily accessible and available for inspection by the Nominated Supervisor, employees and families.
- Parents of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before the service makes any change to a policy or procedure that may have a significant impact on the service's provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service or the family's ability to utilise the service.

Appendices

- [Get Up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood](#)
- [Get Up and Grow Family Handbook](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines 1-5](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines Summary](#)

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