



Food Policy

Purpose:

To define the approach of the Daylesford Dharma School in the provision of shared food consumed at the school and for student lunches and snacks. This policy is aligned to our precepts of Reverence for Life and Mindful Consumption, and defines our vegetarian school lunches approach and our vegan shared communal food approach.

Basic Belief:

The Daylesford Dharma School promotes the practice of healthy and sustainable food choices in line with our precepts, ethics and philosophy.

Aims:

- To promote food practices that will inspire children to make healthy, considered and self-empowered choices.
- To promote food practices that will support the development of compassion and the view of interdependence.
- To support skills development and exposure to food diversity that underpins the principles of sustainability and mindful consumption.
- To support children towards developing independent skills in growing, harvesting, storing and preparing food.
- To offer an approach to food consumption that supports our school community to regard food choices as another area of behaviour that can increase the development of our community's awareness and our practice of Non-harm.

Principles:

We encourage:

- Healthy eating options
- Mindful consumption
- Home cooked snacks
- Whole foods
- Celebration of cooking and eating together in community in a safe and inclusive way.

We discourage:

- Pre-packaged food
- Sugar-based snacks
- Low nutrition snacks.



Practices

Sweeteners

Our School has a number of students who experience strong lack of impulse control and allergy symptoms after consuming cane sugar, commercial sweeteners and preservatives. Any communal food that is brought into the School needs to be completely free from cane sugar and artificial sweeteners. Other sweeteners may be used in baking and we ask that they are limited to birthdays and celebrations. Some alternative sweetener options include date sugar, coconut sugar, maple syrup and rice malt syrup. Our preference for celebrating birthdays is to bring in a fruit platter for sharing which the children all enjoy.

Packaging

The school adopts a “nude-food” policy whereby we ask that food and snacks supplied be free from packaging when possible.

** Our nude food policy is engaged with in Term 4 of each year so that students understand the environmental impact of our food packaging choice.*

Our Non-harm Approach

Personal Food

Our school mandates a food policy whereby we ask that all food brought into the school for individual consumption by staff, students, parents and volunteers is vegetarian.

Communal Food

On occasions where the school community shares a meal the School requires that food options are free from all animal products i.e. vegan/plant-based.

This extends to our kitchen garden programme and all fundraising and marketing events involving the school.

The food provided on school camps and excursions will also be free from all animal products.

Please note birthday cakes brought into school are considered communal food and also need to be vegan, and to work within our policy on sweeteners.

The school aims to support parents where needed with recipes and suggestions of vegan and sugar free alternatives for any communal food.

Allergies

If any children with allergies enrol at the school then further food ingredient exclusion may be necessary to communal food or even possibly private food in the case of severe allergies.



Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Observe student food consumption at designated meal and snack times.
- Support students to ensure they consume adequate food to sustain them throughout the day.
- Encourage healthy eating options.
- Be mindful of working safely around any allergies where applicable.
- Be mindful of the communal food policy on and off-site.

School leadership will:

- Ensure new staff and new families are provided information about the food policy and understand it clearly.
- Clarify if any new families have allergies, or new allergies present, and amend current working protocols if necessary for either individuals, whole school or individual classrooms, while taking into account safety, inclusion and effort required on the part of other families.

Students will:

- Ensure they consume adequate food to sustain them throughout the day.
- Eat only the food provided for them by their families, unless sharing communal food.

Parents will:

- Provide healthy vegetarian food choices for their child/ren.
- Provide adequate food to sustain their child/ren throughout the day.
- Ensure any communal food brought to school meets the guidelines above.
- Inform the school in the event of any allergies.

Review Date:

28/11/2024