

FOOD POLICY

RATIONALE

All food premises, including schools, must demonstrate that food is safe to eat in accordance with the *Victorian Food Act 1984* (amended in 1997 and 2001).

Students eat regularly throughout the school day, but to ensure the safety of students and the cleanliness of the school grounds, eating needs to be managed appropriately. The regular intake of healthy foods and water enable the body and brain to function at peak performance, without the usual peaks and troughs that typify fluctuating energy levels brought about by irregular eating and drinking.

Evidence indicates that school health programs, which are comprehensive and integrated, and include the curriculum, the environment and the community, are more likely to lead to advancements in the health of school children and adolescents. Healthy nutritional habits are essential to the growth and development of children.

BROAD GUIDELINES

Food Safety in Schools and Food Handling Regulations

Under the current provisions of the Food (Amendment) Act (2001), registered food businesses must prepare and lodge a food safety program with the relevant municipal council at the time of registration and re-registration. In Victoria, all food businesses are now classed as either Class 1 or Class 2 food premises. The requirements for each are different:

- Class 1 food premises must prepare an individualised food safety program which must be independently audited each year.
- Class 2 food premises must prepare a food safety program based on a template. School canteens are regarded as Class 2 food premises.

In line with the template food safety program, a food safety supervisor is also required for all premises that prepare or serve food. The role of supervisor will depend on the staffing required in food handling or preparation programs and may be a combination of Education Support Staff and/or a teacher. The food safety supervisor must have the appropriate level of training, skills and knowledge to ensure that all regulations are followed and that anyone handling food (staff/students and/or volunteers) have the appropriate level of training.

Health Education

Concord School encourages a school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods as a healthy lifestyle supports positive learning and health outcomes for children and young people.

Victorian government schools including primary, secondary, special and language schools, should support a healthy eating culture by developing a healthy school food service and promoting healthy eating principles.

Schools should ensure healthy food choices are the major option made available to the school community by their school, and should never supply high sugar content drinks or confectionery.

Concord School's aim is to build a strong and healthy school community skilled in making healthy decisions and choices. School food services can have a major impact on the foods and drinks that students are exposed to and consume. Enjoyment of healthy foods and drinks has a wide range of positive benefits for student health and learning outcomes such as:

- providing important nutrients that students need so that they are alert and engaged in classroom activities
- improve physical development and performance
- supporting the development of healthy eating habits and preferences
- paving the way for good health and prevention of chronic illness.

It is important that parents/carers, all school staff and students work together to support a whole-school-approach to healthy eating and build a school culture which supports students to choose nutritious foods, drinks and a healthy lifestyle.

A healthy school food service:

- makes it easy for students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- offers a variety of nutritious foods
- promotes foods that are consistent with Australian Dietary Guidelines/Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- complements the diverse elements of the school curriculum
- involves students, parents and the wider school community
- is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Cafe Manager and Food Technology Teacher (and attached Education Support Staff in these programs) must be accredited food safety supervisors. Others (staff/students/volunteers) who assist with food service will be trained on an 'as needed' basis.

Personal Hygiene Practices

Good personal hygiene is essential to ensure that food is not contaminated with food-poisoning bacteria, foreign objects or chemicals. Hands and other parts of the body can transfer food-poisoning bacteria to food. A high standard of personal hygiene and cleanliness is paramount when food is being handled. Hair, jewellery and clothing can also contain and spread bacteria, as can food handlers who are ill or those with wounds or infections.

The main principles for good personal hygiene practices include:

- hand washing—always wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before handling food and after visiting the toilet, coughing or sneezing, handling garbage, touching hair or other body parts or any other activity that may carry bacteria to food.
- personal cleanliness—when handling food, tie long hair back or cover it, wear limited jewellery, wear gloves, wear clean protective clothing over normal clothing and store personal items and spare clothes away from any areas involving food handling.
- personal behaviour—do not smoke, chew gum or undertake any other unhygienic practice in food handling areas.
- illness and injuries—all wounds or cuts on hands or arms are to be completely covered with a wound strip or bandage. If the wound is on the hands, disposable gloves must be worn over the top of the wound strip. Both the wound strip and gloves must be changed regularly. If someone is suffering from a disease, which is likely to be transmitted through food, they are not to handle food.

Food Preparation Practices and Equipment

Food naturally contains bacteria and some food may contain food poisoning bacteria. Foods need to be handled correctly to ensure that they do not become contaminated and that the bacteria already in the food does not have an opportunity to grow. If raw food is cooked thoroughly most of these bacteria will be killed. However, if raw food comes into contact with other food that has already been cooked, or is ready-to-eat, the bacteria can transfer to this food. This is called cross-contamination. For this reason, it is important to keep raw food totally separate from cooked or ready-to-eat foods. Important considerations need to be taken in the following areas:

- Where perishable foods are supplied Concord School staff will ensure they are being transported in a refrigerated food vehicle. Deliveries of dry goods such as bread and cans will be checked for unbroken packaging (as damage may mean the contents may not be suitable for consumption).
- Separate utensils, chopping boards and other equipment will be used for raw and ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross contamination. All fruit and vegetables will be thoroughly washed before use.
- Raw foods, which are to be cooked, can be safely handled with bare hands provided hands are clean.
- Cooked or ready-to-eat foods will be handled with utensils such as tongs, spoons, spatulas or disposable gloves. Gloves will be changed (at least) hourly or sooner if they become torn or if there is a change in

task. Hands will always be washed before gloves are put on. New gloves will be put on when changing from handling raw food to ready-to-eat food. Never touch food with gloves that have been used for cleaning.

- All foods, especially those of animal origin, will be thoroughly cooked. All food being reheated will be brought to the boil and simmered for at least five minutes. Frozen food will be thawed before cooking and/or food cooked from a frozen state will be cooked right through. Food will be thawed in the bottom part of the refrigerator. Microwave ovens can be used to thaw food provided that the food is cooked immediately afterwards.
- Cooking utensils and electrical equipment must be used in the allocated food preparation areas of the school (Discovery Centre, Gym kitchen, Food Technology Centre, Café, Staffrooms (staff only) and Secondary 11/12 kitchenette area (supervised only)) and must be tagged by authorised electrical contractors.
- If a staff member requires the use of kitchen equipment or utensils, they must contact and reserve this with the appropriate staff member, giving a minimum of 24 hours notice.
- If a staff member requires the use of a food preparation space, they may request this via the resource bookings on Compass and this will be approved/not approved by the appropriate person.

Food Storage and Display

Food naturally contains bacteria and some food may contain food poisoning bacteria. If food is not stored, displayed or transported correctly, these bacteria can multiply to dangerous levels. The temperature range between 5°C and 60°C is known as the temperature *danger zone*. 'High risk' foods must spend only the minimum possible time in this zone.

- High risk foods are those that contain meat, dairy products and seafood. High-risk foods must be temperature controlled. Cold food will be stored at below 5°C. Hot food will be kept at above 60°C. Frozen food will be kept frozen. Freezers will be defrosted regularly and will not be overloaded. Stored foods will be covered with lids, foil or plastic film. The operating temperatures of refrigerators and freezers will be regularly checked.
- Canned food will be transferred to a suitable container and labelled with the date once the can is opened.
- Foods past their use by/best before date will be disposed of.
- Chemicals, cleaning equipment and personal belongings will be stored away from food preparation and food storage areas.
- Food that is displayed in preparation for consumption will be wrapped or covered.
- Hot food (such as take-away pizza, fish and chips, etc) needs to be consumed immediately upon delivery to school.
- Foods containing meat or other ingredients that spoil easily that have been prepared at school, must not be sent home.

Cleaning Procedures

Food preparation areas will be regularly cleaned to remove food residues and dirt which may contain food poisoning and spoilage organisms, attract birds, rodents and insects, and act as a source of food contamination. Effective cleaning and sanitising will be completed to minimise the risk of food contamination and food poisoning. In the allocated food preparation areas, cleaning products that have been purchased by the school in line with department regulations may be used (with the correct MSDS that is located in the Food Technology room).

Permanent Food Premises

Concord School Cafe is registered with the municipal council. It has been built and designed so that the food can be prepared safely and efficiently.

All food *prepared for consumption* on school premises must be prepared in the Food Technology Centre, Cafe, Gym kitchen, Discovery Centre kitchen and Secondary 11/12 kitchenette (supervision only) and staffrooms (staff only) and not in classrooms to ensure safe food handling practices are observed. In addition, sharp knives, hot liquids and electrical equipment pose an OH&S danger to staff, students and volunteers and are not safe to utilise in classrooms. The Food Technology Centre, Gym kitchen and Discovery Centre are available for class bookings.

Permission is needed by the Section Leader and/or one of the school Principals for pre-prepared food (such as cakes or snack food provided for students' birthday parties) to be brought into and eaten in a classroom. It may only be served in classrooms providing appropriate storage and hygiene measures have been undertaken to ensure the foods are safe for consumption.

Temporary Food Premises

Temporary food premises such as food stalls/barbeques for Meet the Teacher Night, Information Night, Christmas Concert or section events need to be constructed so that they prevent the contamination of food, particularly by dust, insects and customers.

All benches and tables need to have surfaces that are smooth and able to be cleaned.

A sink connected to hot and cold water supply must be available near the stall, along with detergent and disposable paper towels.

Adequate refrigeration must be available.

An adequate rubbish receptacle must be provided for storage of refuse.

All waste water must be disposed to the sewer, not storm-water.

At the conclusion of the event all utensils and equipment should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised prior to storage. Utensils should be washed as soon as possible in clean, hot soapy water and rinsed in clean water.

Special Dietary Requirements

Some students may require special diets for medical reasons. The school food service should try to meet these needs as close as possible so that all children can enjoy eating a healthy lunch from the Cafe or Food Technology Programs. Any special needs for children with disabilities such as modified texture diets or wheelchair access to these locations should also be considered.

The school Principal, child's teacher or parents should provide advice of any special dietary needs to Food Technology, school nurse and/or other food program staff.

Healthy Eating and Food Choices

Information will be updated in the School Parent Information Booklet, starting from 2021, stating the school's position on healthy eating and food choices including the food/drink that is not permitted at school:

- Food/drink not permitted are soft drink and Chewing gum (unless permitted by an authorised therapist and permission given by the school).
- All staff should lead by example with displaying healthy choices when in the presence of a student.
- Students participate in the Food Technology program where healthy food choices are explored and encouraged.
- Upper Primary students participate in a cooking program with allied health staff and healthy food choices must be available.
- Upper Primary students participate in a shopping elective with classroom teachers and students are encouraged to purchase healthy foods.
- Food Technology, Cafe/canteen programs and classroom programs that require food use for their learning (eg. preCAL) at Concord must align with the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and nutritional requirements for children and teenagers as outlined by Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- The Cafe, VCAL coffee program and/or canteen will only sell foods consistent with the DEECD healthy food policy. See:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/healthyeating.aspx>

Food Safety – Student and Staff Personal Foods

Staff members must not leave the staffroom/s with hot drinks or food unless they are in a vessel with a tight lid.

With the exception of Secondary 11/12 students who have been given permission from the Secondary 11/12 Team Leader and their parent/carer, students are not permitted to have boiling water so they may not bring noodles or similar items for lunch.

Due to safety issues, student food must not be heated by students or staff members. Parents are requested to send food that requires heating in a food thermos which is already heated. Any food heating or cooking appliances including microwaves, toasters, sandwich presses, etc must not be used or kept in classrooms. This

does not apply for the Secondary 11/12 kitchenette where students from this section who have permission to use these items (see above) and are supervised by Secondary 11/12 staff whilst using this equipment. Bringing cooking appliances from home is prohibited due to not having the required work safety plans and electrical tagging.

Eating of food on the yard is not permitted as it is a choking hazard and could potentially attract wasps. Concord is not a nut free school, however food containing nuts is discouraged in classes where there is a child with nut allergies or anaphylaxis. Families in those classes must be advised of other students who suffer **any food** allergies or anaphylaxis in that room as to discourage sending nut products. The food used in cooking programs at school can contain nuts if there is no student or staff member in that class who has an allergy or anaphylaxis to nuts. Rooms must be thoroughly cleaned after using nuts to avoid contamination and subsequent allergic or anaphylactic reactions.

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

The use of food as a resource for teaching programs across the school must be limited and alternatives used instead. If food is required for an activity, the teacher must choose healthy foods and limit unhealthy foods (eg. not using smarties for counters in numeracy). Students should not eat the foods after the activity is completed. Each section must have their own tub containing kitchen items used for non-cooking activities available for their curriculum purposes (eg. measuring cups or measuring jugs in numeracy, etc). These items should not be taken from the Food Technology Centre.

External Foods

Foods that are brought on to the premises for a special occasion (eg. fish and chip lunch or birthday cakes) must be limited and have the approval of the Section Leader and/or one of the school Principals. When food is brought on to the premises, food should be labelled and ingredients listed (where possible).

Food on Excursions or Camps

When on an excursion and students are allowed to purchase food, the teacher or other staff members must encourage students to purchase healthy food options.

All school activities, excursions and camps etc. will involve detailed information to parents (where possible) regarding the food menu and will require parent approval.

Food as a Gift or Reward

Food must not be given as a gift (eg. Christmas stocking with lollies or Easter eggs) to any student at Concord by a staff member. Food rewards are highly discouraged, however in exceptional circumstances they will only be permitted with approval from the Section Leader and/or one of the school Principals and must follow the healthy eating guidelines of the school.

REFERENCES

Department of Human Services <https://www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au/>

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development pages

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/canteens-and-healthy-eating/policy>

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/healthyeating.aspx>

Food (Amendment) Act (2001)

<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/as-made/acts/food-amendment-act-2001>

Information on food safety code can be accessed at:

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>

Additional Resources:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/HealthyLiving/eating-tips-for-school-children>

<http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/>

<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/vic>

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>

<https://www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-places/schools>