Creek Street
Christian College

Nutrition and Active Play Policy (Early Learning Centre)

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1. Purpose:

Creek Street Christian College (the College) is a registered independent, co-educational Christian school providing education from the Early Learning Centre (ELC) to Year 12. This policy applies specifically to the Early Learning Centre.
This policy explains how the College promotes healthy eating and physical activity, and their contribution to good health and overall wellbeing. It outlines how these are supported through the College's curriculum, events, environment and ethos.

This policy provides guidelines for:

- engaging with external initiatives that promote active and healthy lifestyles
- ensuring all food preparation and consumption at the College reflects the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- considering the dietary and cultural needs of students and families when planning food for College events and activities
- demonstrating the benefits of active play and healthy eating throughout the College environment.
- These guidelines encourage Australians to eat a variety of foods from each of the five food groups every day:
    - grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties
    - vegetables and legumes/beans
    - fruit
    - milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives
    - lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans (*Note: the College highly encourages a nut & allergy aware environment)*

2. Policy Statement:

The College acknowledges the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, and its contribution to good health and overall wellbeing.

The College is committed to:

- promoting a healthy lifestyle for all students, including eating nutritious food and participating in physical activity
- providing a safe, supportive and social environment in which children can enjoy eating
- providing regular opportunities for active play and physical activity
- encouraging students to make healthy lifestyle choices consistent with national and state guidelines and recommendations
- considering the dietary and cultural needs of students and families when planning food for College events and activities
- consulting and working collaboratively with families in regard to their child's nutrition and dietary requirements, including responding appropriately to food allergies and recognising cultural and religious practices.

- promoting awareness of nut allergies and anaphylaxis by maintaining a nut & allergy aware environment environment, and asking families not to send nuts or foods containing nuts to the College
- promoting Nude Food Week by encouraging students to bring healthy lunch boxes free from unnecessary packaging
- respectfully discussing any concerns about a student's food choices with their parents or carers
- working with the wider community, where possible, to share healthy eating initiatives and help families understand how healthy eating supports learning.

3. Scope:

This policy applies to the College Council, leadership team, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, contractors, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Creek Street Christian College Early Learning Centre (ELC).

Although this policy applies to the Early Learning Centre, healthy eating and physical activity are encouraged and promoted throughout the whole College.

4. Background:

Promoting a healthy lifestyle in early childhood education and care settings has many benefits, including a positive impact on each child's learning and development. Learning about healthy eating and the importance of physical activity from an early age helps children develop good habits that can last a lifetime. Educators and staff are well placed to build this awareness with children and their families, while respecting each family's lifestyle choices and cultural and religious values.

The food we eat gives our bodies the nutrients we need to stay healthy. Good nutrition comes from eating a balanced variety of foods. It matters most in childhood, when children need plenty of nutrients to grow and develop. Research shows that when children are offered a variety of healthy foods, they can and do make good choices. Because most children have formed their lifelong eating habits before they start school, it is important to give preschool children a strong foundation in healthy eating. Education and care settings give children many chances to try a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and from other children (Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, p. 30 – refer to Sources).

Active play uses the large muscles of the body. It helps children build a strong and healthy body, develop motor and coordination skills and feel a sense of wellbeing, and it helps protect against disease. Active play is about moving, being and doing.

Good nutrition and an active lifestyle support a strong sense of health and wellbeing. This gives children confidence, energy and optimism, which helps them concentrate, cooperate and learn (Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, p. 30 – refer to Sources). Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition and active play, links directly to Outcome 3 of both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (refer to Sources).

The Australian Government has published guidelines, recommendations and resources for healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings. These include the Australian Dietary Guidelines and Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood resources (refer to Sources). The Healthy Eating Advisory Service provides practical advice, resources and training for early childhood

services. It is delivered by the National Nutrition Foundation with support from the Victorian Government (refer to Sources).

Early childhood education and care services can also participate in Healthy Places Healthy Futures, formerly the Achievement Program (refer to Sources). The program supports healthy learning environments and a coordinated approach to health and wellbeing.

5. Relevant Standards and Legislation

Relevant legislation and standards include, but are not limited to:

- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic)
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 77, 78, 79, 80, 90, 160, 162, 168, 170, 171 and 172. Regulations 79 and 80 apply to food and beverages supplied by the service, not food supplied by parents/guardians for their own child; a weekly menu is not required for family-provided lunchboxes.
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Food Act 1984 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 706 – Anaphylaxis Management in Victorian Schools
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

6. Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For commonly used terms, such as Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and Regulatory Authority, refer to the General Definitions section of this manual.

Active play: Play that uses the large muscles of the body. It is essential for a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth and development.

Adequate supervision: (In relation to this policy) all children, individually and in groups, in all areas of the service, are within sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times, including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services must meet the legislated educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision helps protect children from hazards that may arise during play, including hazards created by equipment. Adequate supervision means constant, active and diligent supervision of every child. Educators must always be positioned to observe each child, respond to individual needs and step in immediately if necessary.

Factors that affect the level of supervision needed include:

- the number, ages and abilities of children
- the number and positioning of educators
- the current activity of each child
- the areas where children are playing (visibility and accessibility)
- the developmental profile of each child and of the group
- the experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- the need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

Healthy eating: Eating patterns that provide all the recommended nutrients for growth, development, good health and wellbeing, now and in the future. It also includes preparing, serving and eating food in a way that recognises its importance as a social and cultural activity.

Nut & allergy aware environment: An environment where the College community is asked not to bring nuts or foods containing nuts, and where staff are trained to recognise and respond to allergic reactions. Because the College cannot guarantee a completely nut-free environment, the term "nut-aware" is used.

Nutrition: The process of providing or receiving the food needed for health and growth.

'Sometimes' foods and drinks: Also called discretionary foods. Foods and drinks that are not needed for a healthy diet and are high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt, with few vitamins, minerals or fibre.

7. Procedures

7.1 Meal and Snack Times

We see children as active participants in their own learning and encourage them to make meaningful decisions about their own education and care. Eating together is a social occasion. It helps children see a variety of foods in each other's lunch boxes and learn about the different foods friends and staff eat for health and cultural reasons.

At Creek Street Christian College ELC, we are passionate about providing an environment that supports and encourages healthy eating for happy, healthy bodies and minds. We give children many opportunities to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children (EYLF – refer to Sources).

Healthy eating also supports speech development. Chewing exercises and strengthens the jaw, and the fine coordination of the tongue, lips, jaw and palate helps children produce the many different sounds used in speech.

Parents/guardians provide their child's lunch, snacks and a clearly labelled water bottle each day. Families are encouraged to provide nutritious food in quantities appropriate to their child's needs and prepared safely for their age and eating abilities. The ELC has two main eating times; additional food and drink opportunities are provided as needed to meet individual children's needs:

- Morning fruit/snack time: two snacks are kept in a separate snack box for morning tea on the lunch box trolley
- Lunch: a healthy lunch is packed in a separate container and placed on the lunch box trolley.
- Perishable food should be packed in an insulated lunchbox with an ice brick. Educators follow the ELC's Food Safety Policy and Hygiene Policy for storing and handling lunchbox food, check for concerns before serving, and communicate with parents/guardians if concerns arise. Educators arrange a safe,

suitable alternative where food cannot be served or is insufficient, taking the child's dietary and medical needs into account.

7.2 Lunch Box Ideas

Ideas for your child's snack bag and lunch box include:

- Fruit and vegetables for vitamins, minerals and fibre, e.g. appropriately prepared carrots, tomatoes, apples, pears, strawberries, bananas and diced fruit in natural juice. Food must suit each child's age, development and eating abilities. Hard fruit and vegetables may need cooking, grating or very fine slicing; small round foods such as grapes and cherry tomatoes should be cut lengthways into appropriately sized pieces to reduce choking risk. Children sit while eating and are actively supervised.
- Breads and cereals for body and brain energy and to help fill hungry tummies, e.g. wholegrain sandwiches, rolls and wraps, pikelets, fruit bread, plain wholegrain savoury biscuits, rice and pasta.
- Meat and other protein foods for strong muscles, e.g. lean meat in wholegrain sandwiches or salads, leftover meat-based casseroles and pasta (packed with an ice brick).
- Dairy foods for strong bones, e.g. reduced-fat cheese slices, reduced-fat cheese in sandwiches, reduced-fat yoghurt with chopped fruit. (Full-fat dairy is recommended for children under 2 years.)
- Water: children bring a named drink bottle filled with water only. Please do not send juice, cordial or flavoured milk, as these are often high in sugar.

High-fibre foods support happy, healthy and regular tummies. Try to include plenty of high-fibre foods every day, e.g. wholegrain/wholemeal bread or wraps, fruit and vegetables (skin on where possible), brown or wholegrain rice, pasta and noodles, and beans and lentils.

Foods that are not consistent with this policy include: sweet biscuits, flavoured savoury biscuits (e.g. Shapes), flavoured rice biscuits, chocolate spreads (e.g. Nutella), cakes, chocolates, chips, lollies, flavoured custards, fruit straps and bars, fruit juice and cordial. Educators work with families to accommodate documented medical, dietary and feeding needs, including agreed individual arrangements where required. Educators encourage eating without pressure, punishment or shame, respect children's hunger and fullness cues, and discuss food concerns privately with parents/guardians. Food is not withheld as a punishment. Allergy risk controls and safe food preparation continue to apply to all individual arrangements.

Children are encouraged to:

- wash their hands before handling food
- manage their own food independently
- sit down to eat in the designated areas
- put their food scraps in the correct buckets for recycling and composting.

Staff will supervise children while they are eating.

7.3 Nut & Allergy Aware College

Creek Street Christian College Early Learning Centre is a nut-aware service. Children with severe nut allergies attend the ELC, so please do not send nuts or nut products, such as peanut butter or nut spreads. Food should not be shared between children. Refer to the Anaphylaxis Procedure for more information.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 College Council

- ensuring this policy is implemented across the Early Learning Centre
- ensuring the College environment, curriculum and events support students and families to make healthy choices about eating and physical activity
- ensuring the College meets its obligations under Ministerial Order 706 and the Anaphylaxis Procedure
- ensuring food services, canteen providers and contractors are aware of and follow this policy
- ensuring staff receive the training and information they need to implement this policy.

8.2 Approved Provider

The Approved Provider is ultimately accountable for ensuring the ELC meets its legal obligations. They are responsible for:

- ensuring the service environment and educational program support children and families to make healthy choices for eating and active play
- ensuring nominated supervisors, staff and volunteers implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children (Regulation 77)
- ensuring children have access to safe drinking water at all times, and are offered food and beverages appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis throughout the day (Regulation 78(1))
- ensuring celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events are consistent with this policy and its procedures.

8.3 Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for day-to-day implementation at the service level. They are responsible for:

- implementing, and ensuring all staff and volunteers implement, adequate health and hygiene practices and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food (Regulation 77)
- ensuring children have access to safe drinking water at all times and are offered food and beverages on a regular basis throughout the day (Regulation 78(2))
- ensuring the cultural and religious practices and requirements of families are accommodated to support children's learning and development
- developing and reviewing guidelines for celebrations, fundraising activities and other service events in consultation with educators, staff and families
- supporting participation in Healthy Places Healthy Futures (formerly the Achievement Program), where the ELC chooses to participate
- developing links with local and regional health services, community organisations and businesses that support healthy eating and active play.

8.4 Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, ELC Educators and Staff

- considering this policy when organising excursions and service events
- complying with this policy and the Food Act 1984 (Vic)
- following safe food handling, hygiene and storage practices, and preventing cross-contamination for children with diagnosed food allergies
- knowing each child's food allergies, medical conditions and dietary needs (including diabetes), and following individual medical management, risk minimisation and communication plans. The Approved Provider ensures these arrangements are in place, and the Nominated Supervisor works with families to develop and communicate them, in accordance with the Medical Conditions Policy, Anaphylaxis Policy and Asthma Policy
- supporting students on placement and volunteers to follow this policy
- discussing healthy eating choices with children, introducing the idea of 'sometimes' foods and drinks
- exploring and discussing diverse cultural, religious, social and family lifestyles
- keeping drinking water readily available, reminding children to drink regularly, ensuring children can easily access their own clearly labelled drink bottles, and providing food and drinks at frequent, regular intervals
- encouraging children to take part in and enjoy snack and mealtimes without feeling rushed
- providing adequate supervision during all meal and snack times
- encouraging children to be independent at snack and meal times (e.g. opening lunch boxes, pouring drinks, feeding themselves, serving and using utensils in a culturally sensitive way)
- providing all children with daily, age-appropriate, skill-building active play, both outdoors and indoors (particularly in bad weather), with safe practices and adequate supervision. For children aged 3–5 years, the whole-day movement recommendation is at least 180 minutes of varied physical activity, including at least 60 minutes of energetic play, spread throughout the day. The ELC program contributes to this whole-day recommendation in partnership with families
- acting as positive role models by taking part in physical activity
- minimising and closely supervising screen-based activities, in line with Australia's age-specific movement guidelines. For children aged 2–5 years, sedentary screen time should be no more than one hour across the whole day; less is better. This is not an allowance for the ELC session. Screen-based activities are not recommended for children under 2 years
- providing age-appropriate road safety education, including pedestrian and passenger safety, for children and parents/guardians
- promoting safe behaviour through daily practice as part of the program
- providing ongoing information, resources and support to families to help promote good health for young children, including healthy suggestions for morning/afternoon tea and lunch boxes.

8.5 Canteen, Food Service Providers and Contractors

- following this policy, including the nut-aware requirements
- providing food and drinks consistent with the Healthy Eating Advisory Service guidelines
- following safe food handling practices under the Food Act 1984 (Vic) and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

8.6 Parents/Guardians

- following the requirements of this policy
- providing details of their child's nutritional and dietary requirements, including cultural or religious practices and food allergies, on the enrolment form, discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor before their child starts, and updating the service if requirements change (refer to the Anaphylaxis Procedure and Asthma Procedure)
- communicating regularly with educators and staff about their child's nutritional and dietary needs, including food preferences
- providing healthy, nutritious food and drinks for snacks, meals, celebrations, fundraising and College

events, in line with this policy
- encouraging their child to drink plenty of water and to be active, including walking or riding to the College where appropriate
- discussing road and car safety with their child, and role-modelling safe behaviour.

8.7 Children

- bringing a water bottle and healthy food each day
- not sharing food with others, to protect students with allergies
- taking part in active play.

8.8 Volunteers and Students on Placement

Volunteers and students on placement are responsible for following this policy and its procedures while at the College.

9. Sources

- Australian Government, Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood: https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/get-up-grow
- Australian Government Department of Health, 24-hour movement guidelines (Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines): https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity/24-hour-movement-guidelines-for-all-australians
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (V2.0): https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/Belonging_Being_And_Becoming_V2.0.pdf
- ACECQA, Element 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/guide-nqf/section-3-national-quality-standard-and-assessment-and-rating/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety/standard-21-health/element-213-healthy-lifestyle
- ACECQA, Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements policy guidelines: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-03/Nutrition,%20food%20and%20beverages,%20dietary%20requirements.pdf
- Better Health Channel: https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- Cancer Council – SunSmart: https://www.cancer.org.au/sunsmart
- Cavallini, I and Tedeschi, M (eds) (2008), The Languages of Food: Recipes, Experiences, Thoughts. Reggio Children Publications
- Department of Education Victoria, Anaphylaxis Policy and Ministerial Order 706: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/anaphylaxis/policy
- Department of Education Victoria, Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy (used as a guide): https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/canteens/policy
- Food Safety Victoria, Department of Health – Food Safety and Regulation: 1300 364 352
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand – food safety and food handling: https://www.foodstandards.gov.au
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service (delivered by the National Nutrition Foundation with support from the Victorian Government) – free advice, resources, menu assessment (FoodChecker) and training for schools and early childhood services. Phone 1300 22 52 88, email heas@nnf.org.au: https://heas.health.vic.gov.au
- Healthy Places Healthy Futures (formerly the Achievement Program): https://healthyplaces.health.vic.gov.au/en/about

- Kidsafe – preventing childhood injuries: https://www.kidsafe.org.au
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Limit 'Sometimes' Foods Background Paper
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Dietary Guidelines: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/adg
- NHMRC (2024), Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (6th edition): https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-guidelines
- Nitzke, S, Riley, D, Ramminger, A and Jacobs, G (2010), Rethinking Nutrition: Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings. Redleaf Press, St Paul, USA
- Oberklaid, F (2004), Health in Early Childhood Settings: From Emergencies to the Common Cold. Pademelon Press, NSW
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF): https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-early-years-learning-development-framework-veyldf
- Healthy Eating Advisory Service, What's in a serve? (including safe preparation of hard fruit and vegetables): https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Whats-in-a-serve.pdf
- Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Foreign bodies inhaled (food-related choking risk and prevention): https://www.rch.org.au/clinicalguide/guideline_index/Foreign_Bodies_Inhaled/
- Australian Government, Recommendations for infants, toddlers and preschoolers (birth to 5 years): https://www.health.gov.au/topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-all-australians/recommendations-for-infants-toddlers-and-preschoolers-birth-to-5-years?language=en

10. Related College Policies

- Anaphylaxis Procedure
- Asthma Procedure
- Camps and Excursions Policy (Excursions and Service Events Policy in the ELC)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Curriculum Development Policy
- First Aid Procedure
- Food Safety Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Inclusion and Equity Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy
- Sun Protection Policy

11. Evaluation

To assess whether this policy is achieving its purpose, the College (and the Approved Provider for the ELC) will:

- regularly seek feedback from staff, educators, parents/guardians, students and others affected by the policy about its effectiveness

- monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, this policy, including any complaints and incidents
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, guidelines and best practice
- review the policy and procedures as part of the College's policy review cycle, or as required
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before policy or procedure changes that may significantly affect the provision of education and care or a family's ability to use the service, and before changes affecting fees or how fees are collected (Regulation 172). If the Approved Provider considers that waiting would pose a risk to a child's safety, health or wellbeing, the relevant protective change may be made without the usual notice period and parents/guardians must be notified as soon as practicable afterwards.

12. Attachments

Nil

13. Authorisation

This policy was first adopted by the Approved Provider of Creek Street Christian College Early Learning Centre on 1 February 2017. This revised version is prepared for College Council approval. Latest approval date: [to be confirmed following approval].

14. Review Date

August 2029, or earlier if legislation, guidance, service practices or identified risks require review.