The Ocean Shores Public School P&C are committed to providing guidance and support for children, parents and staff regarding nutrition and health.

Most states in Australia have clear policies from their health and educations departments about food provision in schools. The 'NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy' (put together by DET and NSW Health) says 'Schools are asked to adopt a whole-of-school approach and use the aims of the Strategy to guide decisions regarding special events, fundraising and classroom rewards.'

The “OS P&C Healthy Eating Guidelines” have been developed in reference to government guidelines as well as the latest scientific and medical research. Responses to a detailed survey of parents in 2012 have also been considered.

Any questions or enquiries regarding these guidelines should be directed to Ocean Shores Public School P&C at ospandc@gmail.com, or via the school on 02 6680 2766.

Why have healthy eating guidelines?

- It is important for children and their families to understand the role of food in health, and how healthy eating and exercise supports physical and mental wellbeing.
- It is important for the school as an educational campus to support good nutrition and health.
- Growing, harvesting, storage and preparation of food are all elements of the food cycle that are vital to the promotion of wellness, both for individuals, our community and the environment.

In order to provide this guidance and support, the P&C has resolved to:

1. Establish parameters to guide decision-making in regards to the running of the canteen and P&C managed events both at school and off-site, such as festivals, carnivals, fund-raising and special events.
2. Propose parameters to guide staff decisions around food in the classroom and events managed by staff, such as school discos.
3. Propose parameters to guide parental decisions around food in the lunch box and special events such as birthdays.
4. Support programs that enhance education around nutrition and health, such as the school gardens, cooking, farmers’ markets program, community gardens.
5. Support the provision of information around healthy eating and providing suggestions for students and parents for healthy eating options.
6. Continue to develop these guidelines in response to new information, arising opportunities, changing circumstances and parental and staff feedback.

Rationale

- The rates of chronic disease and diet-related illnesses in children are steadily on the rise. Lifestyle and in particular food has been identified as a major contributing factor.
- Addressing nutrition and lifestyle factors will help in the prevention of these chronic illness as well as favourably change the progression of these illnesses.
- There is an established association between good nutrition and improved cognition and academic performance.
- The school environment is a crucial setting for implementing policy that promotes healthy eating.
- As parents we are obliged to do what we can (guided by science and by common sense) to ensure both prevention of illness and obtaining optimal health and performance of our children during their schooling years. This will have beneficial effects leading into adulthood.
- The P&C as well as the school can take a leadership role in this, not necessarily simply follow current NSW DET guidelines.
- Current consumption of confectionery is far above the recommended guidelines for Australian children.
- There is a strong link between diets high in added sugar and an increased frequency of obesity in children.

How to use the Guidelines

These Guidelines are designed to establish parameters around food choices.

The P&C can make decisions about what types of food to use at P&C managed events and can make suggestions to staff and parents about the choices they make around food.

It is expected that P&C volunteers will adhere to the guidelines where ever possible when taking part in P&C managed events. The P&C acknowledges there are a range of different opinions amongst parents about food suitability and encourages volunteer parents to adhere to the guidelines even if they are not in total agreement.

Staff and parents can use the guidelines when making choices around food in the school setting. The P&C encourage a school-wide approach to healthy eating and support the school’s confectionery-free policy.
The Guidelines

Nuts

□ Due to a number of students having severe allergies to nuts, Ocean Shores Public School is a “Nut Aware School” and nuts should not be used or included in any way in foods prepared on site or brought into the school. The canteen does not supply nuts or nut derivatives and children are not to bring nuts to school in their lunches/snacks.

Confectionery and soft drinks

It is widely accepted that confectionery and soft drinks can affect children’s behaviour, contribute to dental problems and be contributing factor to the progression of insulin resistance.

Confectionery can be defined as a small snack, chocolate or lolly – often sized for individual consumption – of minimal nutritional value and with sugar as a main ingredient. Confectionery includes: lollies, gum, chocolate, crystallised fruit, lollipops, snakes and toffee.

□ Confectionery and soft drinks should not be sold at the canteen.

□ Confectionery and soft drinks should not be sold at P&C managed fund-raising events and associated extra-curricular activities.

□ Confectionery and soft drinks should not be given to children by teachers or other school staff as part of a rewards program or as part of school events.

NOTE: Small amounts of confectionery products (such as glazes, choc chips and glace fruit) can be used as a thin layer, topping or ingredient on or in a nutritious baked item.

Food Additives

Various food additives have been shown to affect children’s short term behaviour. The long term affects are at this stage unknown.

□ The following additives should not be used in the canteen or P&C managed events:
  Food Colourings E102  E104  E110  E124  E129
  Preservative  E211

Other countries, including the UK have banned these additives and Aldi stores do not stock any foods with these additives.

□ Preservative 220 and 202 are also an issue for some asthmatics and should be avoided where possible.
Gluten
- In recognition of the increasing number of students and parents with gluten intolerance, gluten-free options should be made available at P&C managed events.
- Gluten-free options are to be included in the canteen menu.

Fat
Trans fats are unsaturated fats that act like saturated fats. Eating large amounts of these can increase both your total and bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and decrease your good (HDL) cholesterol.
The FDA in the USA are currently introducing legislation to ban trans-fats.
Commercially produced fats such as margarine spreads, fats used in deep frying and fats used in commercial pastry doughs, are likely to contain some trans fats.

NOTE: the following oils do not contain trans fats, although should be avoided if “hydrogenated”: olive, canola, peanut, sunflower, sesame.
- Margarine should not be used in the canteen or P&C managed events.
- The following items should be served in small portions only, or limited to special occasions: deep fried foods, commercial cakes and biscuits, commercial pies and pastries.
- Foods that contain “partially hydrogenised oil” should not be sold in the canteen or P&C managed events.

Salt
According to government health sites, the average Australian consumes around three times more sodium than they need for good health. Around 75 per cent of the salt in our diet comes from processed foods.
- High-salt foods should be sold in small portions only or limited to special occasions:
  - most ‘fast’ foods, such as pizza, hamburgers, chips
  - most snack foods, such as potato chips
  - processed meats, such as sausages, salami, hot dogs and luncheon meats
  - dehydrated or packet foods, such as instant pasta or soups
  - pre-packaged sauces and condiments, such as tomato sauce and soy sauce, and processed tomato products in general.