The Nest...a small place where
Big things happen.

Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy

Rationale
This Nest promotes safe, healthy eating habits in line with the *Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools and Preschools* and relates to the DECD wellbeing strategy.

In 2009 and 2010 Alberton Preschool was proudly involved in the Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Project (HEPA). Our focus throughout this year long process was on healthy eating and promoting healthy food choices for our children and their families.

From our involvement in this project we developed several strategies for embedding healthy eating in our culture. These include:

- A term long project each year with a focus on how our bodies work and what we can do to make them work their best;
  Encouraging families to send food that is low in sugar, fat and salt.
- Opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food;
- Installing a Pura Tap to ensure children have access to high quality water each day;

We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit the children in three ways:

1. Short term: maximises growth, development, activity levels and good health.
2. Long term: minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life.
3. Good nutrition contributes to good health and wellbeing and this is vital for positive engagement in learning activities.

Therefore:
- Staff in the Nest model and encourage healthy eating behaviours;
- Food and drink are consumed in a safe, supportive environment for all children;
- Parents and caregivers are encouraged to supply healthy foods that fit within the *Right Bite* strategy for their children.

This food policy has been established after consultation with staff and parents within the school community.
Food and Nutrition Curriculum
The Nest’s food and nutrition curriculum
- Is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia, and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food
- Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible.
- Is part of the Early Years Learning Framework and NQS.

The Learning Environment
Children in the Nest:
- Have fresh, clean tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly through the day;
- Children are able to access food when they are hungry. Fresh fruit is available for most of the day. Lunch is a scheduled break at 12:00.
- Eat in a positive, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours;
- Use the School garden to learn about and experience growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious foods.

The Nest:
- Provides rewards/encouragements that are not related to food or drink;
- Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast and regular meals for children;
- Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum;
- Is a breastfeeding friendly site.

Fresh fruits, vegetables or a slice of cheese are recommended for fruit time
Foods unsuitable for fruit time include packaged foods, cakes, sweets and ALL NUT PRODUCTS, including chocolate, cordials, soft drinks and sweetened fruit juices are not recommended.

LUNCH PROGRAM
For children who access our lunch program the Healthy Eating guidelines will still be in place. Parents are encouraged to follow the above guidelines, and ask staff if they have any issues. A healthy lunch box might include a sandwich, fruit, yoghurt, vegetable sticks, cheese, etc. Please do not include chocolate, muesli bars, roll ups, fruit bars, cakes, lollies, etc. Please ask staff if you are unsure.

If children bring food which don not fit within the limits for fat, sugar and salt, staff will ask children to ‘save it for eating at home’. Under no circumstances will staff dispose of the children’s food.

The Nest will ensure a healthy food supply for activities in accordance with the Healthy Eating Guidelines.

CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL OCCASIONS
Due to allergies and the number of children in the Nest we do not encourage sending a cake or sweets for Birthdays. Children will be asked if they would like to celebrate their Birthday with singing or in another way.
**Food safety**

In the Nest We:
- Promote and teach food safety to children during food learning/ cooking activities;
- Encourage staff to access training as appropriate to the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*;
- Promote and encourage correct hand washing procedures with children;
- We cook healthy options on a regular basis and whenever possible we provide recipes or tastings for families.

**Food-related health support planning**
The staff in the Nest liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues.

**Working with families, health services & industry**
The Nest has
- Invited parents and caregivers to be involved in the review of our whole of site food and nutrition policy;
- Invited health professionals to be involved in food and nutrition activities with the children and families;
- Provides information from health professionals to families and caregivers on the *Healthy Eating Guidelines* through a variety of media such as:
  - Newsletters;
  - Policy development/review; 2017
  - Information on enrolment;
  - Pamphlet/Poster displays.