

# HEALTH & WELL-BEING POLICY 2020

Forming part of Giant Steps Tasmania's *Health & Safety Manual*

## Policy Statement

Giant Steps Tasmania recognises:

- that healthy eating has a major influence on the health and wellbeing of students, staff, parents/ carers and members of the wider community
- that healthy eating habits are developed in the early years and are carried through to adulthood
- the importance of mental health and well-being, its impact on learning for students and on the lives of staff and parents/ carers
- the inter-relationship between the social and emotional aspects of learning and academic learning
- that getting help and support early for mental health difficulties is important for students, parents/ carers and staff

Giant Steps Tasmania also recognises that:

- our students may not be able to eat a variety of foods because of underlying medical conditions
- a diagnosis of ASD may pre-dispose students to have issues around food
- many students and particularly those who are non-verbal may find it difficult to communicate problems they are encountering which might contribute to mental health issues
- caring for and educating students who have a diagnosis of ASD can cause stresses in the lives of parents/ carers and staff
- staff need support to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health issues

This policy is informed by:

- The Australian Dietary Guidelines <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
- The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating <http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/australian-guide-healthy-eating>
- The work of the National Autistic Society <http://www.autism.org.uk/about/health/dietary-management/restricted-diet.aspx>
- Move Well, Eat Well <http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/mwew>

- Be You <http://childcarealliance.org.au> (previously Kids Matter)

Because of its belief in and support for the principles of the two organisations, Giant Steps Tasmania is aiming to achieve the Move Well, Eat Well Award and recognition as a Be You Learning Community.

## Purpose

The aim of this policy is to give guidelines to:

- promote nutritious and varied food choices for students
- encourage families to provide healthy food and drink choices
- provide a positive and safe eating environment
- teach students about food and healthy eating
- communicate with parents and carers about healthy eating
- encourage staff to learn about healthy eating and to role model healthy eating
- ensure that all staff have the opportunity to be involved in regular outdoor exercise
- encourage staff to undertake regular exercise and role model a healthy attitude to physical activity
- work closely with parents/ carers to support an active lifestyle for students
- develop the teaching of Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) skills in students to support resilience and mental well-being
- help staff recognise and respond to the early signs and symptoms of mental health difficulties in students, parents/ carers and colleagues
- encourage parents/ carers to develop networks which support them

## Implementation

Food is not used as a reward at Giant Steps Tasmania. Staff use the following rewards:

- Extra preferred activities
- Time using an educational computer game
- Playing a game or puzzle
- Receiving a sticker, pencil, rubber, etc.
- Receiving free play time
- Picking a lucky dip prize
- Receiving a mystery pack prize

Giant Steps Tasmania's staff model healthy eating and lifestyle choices. Schemes of work on Nutrition and Health are embedded in the curriculum.

Water is the drink of choice at Giant Steps Tasmania and staff and students are encouraged to drink plenty of water every day.

At celebratory events, the only beverage available is water.

Students and staff participate in Health Hustle every day.

Giant Steps Tasmania produces an advisory booklet for parents/ carers called *Healthy Eating, Healthy Living*. This is available on the school's website.

Giant Steps Tasmania is moving towards a Healthy Fundraisers approach to raising funds which means that chocolate will not be used.

Cooking activities at Giant Steps focus on healthy food and each class is involved in choosing, growing and cooking food.

Because some students have a very restricted diet, it is not possible to ban any food items at Giant Steps Tasmania. Parents/ Carers are informed when there is a student with severe food allergies attending. The sharing of food from lunch boxes is not permitted at Giant Steps Tasmania.

Parents/ Carers are encouraged to provide healthy, waste-free lunchboxes and are encouraged to submit recipes and healthy lifestyle tips for inclusion in the Parents' Newsletter and the Giant Steps Tasmania website.

At Giant Steps Tasmania, students are encouraged to try new foods and eat sitting down in a calm and relaxed environment.

At Giant Steps Tasmania 'occasional' foods are limited and healthy options are provided at celebrations. This practice is monitored by staff submitting menus to the Principal before permission is granted to hold an event.

Whenever possible, members of the local community are invited to attend Giant Steps Tasmania's celebratory events.

At Giant Steps Tasmania, bike riding and active play is encouraged during break times. All students have timetabled access to the pool and to therapeutic movement activities.

Schemes of Work on the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEL/ SEAL) are embedded in the curriculum.

Giant Steps Tasmania staff members are supported in their day-to-day work through access to the organisation's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which provides a maximum of 2 paid-for appointments with Catholic Care who have offices in Launceston, Hobart, Devonport and Burnie (Tel: 1800 819 447).

Giant Steps Tasmania's staff use their daily interactions with students to support the development of students' SEAL skills, in and out of the classroom, and model thoughtful, respectful interactions.

Students are provided with regular opportunities to practise and adapt their social and emotional skills to new situations in the classroom, school and wider community.

Giant Steps Tasmania proactively develops collaborative working relationships with parents and carers to promote children's mental health, well-being and learning through the use of newsletters, the website, social media, Communication Books, informal and formal meetings.

Parents and Carers are encouraged to support each other through Parents and Carers Group meetings which take place regularly and which raise matters of importance to the Group with the principal and other staff members.

Giant Steps Tasmania's staff are supported to acquire the knowledge and skills to communicate effectively with parents/ carers about their children in areas related to child development, learning and mental health and well-being.

Giant Steps Tasmania's staff are assisted to acquire the knowledge and skills to recognise and appropriately offer support to students, parents/ carers and colleagues experiencing mental health difficulties, including advice on how to access services and, where appropriate, to make referrals.

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
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