



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Education**

Your ref :
Our ref : D19/0033800
Enquiries :

Ms JM Freeman, MLA
Chair
Education and Health Standing Committee
Parliament House
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WEST PERTH WA 6005

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Dear Ms Freeman

Thank you for your letter dated 24 January 2019 regarding information on health and nutrition education in schools.

I acknowledge the importance of the Education and Health Standing Committee inquiry into the role that diet has in the prevention and management of type 2 diabetes.

As you have noted, Western Australian public schools are well placed to support healthy eating and play a vital role in the education and promotion of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles. Along with the *Healthy Food and Drink Policy* (referred to in your letter as the School Healthy Food and Drink Program) and the *School Breakfast Program* (referred to in your letter as the WA School Breakfast and Nutrition Program), there are a number of similar initiatives in Western Australian public schools to support students and their local communities.

The *Crunch&Sip* program is a well-established program run in Western Australian public schools that also promotes healthy eating. The program allows students to eat vegetables and fruit and drink water throughout the day in the classroom. Students bring vegetables or fruit to school each day for the *Crunch&Sip* break. This enables students to refuel with healthy alternatives, to help improve their physical and mental performance and concentration in the classroom, as well as promoting long-term health.

As you are aware, the Department has a *Healthy Food and Drink Policy* developed in consultation with the Western Australian School Canteen Association, to ensure that students are offered healthy and nutritious choices while at school.

Schools also promote healthy eating and active lifestyles through the curriculum area of Health and Physical Education. From Pre-primary to Year 6 in the Health sub-strand *personal, social and community health*, strategies and behaviours are taught to promote healthy eating and regular physical activity. Comparing food labels, choosing healthier foods, and how to improve the nutritional value in meals, are just some of the syllabus content descriptors teachers deliver in their classrooms. Through the health sub-strand *communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing*, students are shown ways in which health messages are conveyed in their communities and how these messages can influence health decisions and behaviours.

The Health curriculum sub-strand *being healthy, safe and active* equips secondary students with skills and strategies to enhance health and well-being in a range of environments. These strategies include healthy practices that support and promote good health, and the influence of messages in the media relating to body image, fast food and alcohol. Within the sub-strand *contributing to healthy and active communities*, students analyse the Australian Dietary Guidelines for healthy food choice and serving sizes. They also explore how traditions, foods and practices of different cultures enhance the well-being of the whole community.

All of these programs aim to educate, motivate and empower not just students, but also their families and local communities, to make healthier food and drink choices and provide supportive environments in which these changes can occur. The Department of Education recognises that while effective work is taking place, establishing change across entire populations is a long term, ongoing process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information.

Your sincerely



Lisa Rodgers
Director General

08 FEB 2019