



### North Ainslie Primary School

## Healthy food and drink guidelines set the tone

**In 2013, North Ainslie Primary School signed up to Fresh Tastes to enhance their approach to health and wellbeing in the school.**

“We had been promoting a healthy-eating school culture since we started our Healthy Eating Hub garden and canteen project,” said Gadia Zrihan, North Ainslie Primary School’s former Healthy Eating Hub garden coordinator and Fresh Tastes working group member. “This has become more embedded since starting Fresh Tastes.”

**With support from Fresh Tastes, North Ainslie Primary School established their own set of healthy food and drink guidelines so there was a shared vocabulary and vision for the whole school community.**

“The North Ainslie Primary School guidelines built on what we had already done and we hope they will pave the way for future developments,” said Gadia. “We want there to be a normalisation of healthy choices offered at school, which is assumed rather than questioned.”

The process to compile a set of school healthy food and drink guidelines took some time, particularly as the whole school community was involved in the consultation phase.

“We established a Healthy Guidelines Working Group of parents and teachers, and held extensive consultations with students, teachers and parents,” explained Gadia.

“Representatives from each group workshopped the issues and filled out surveys trying to understand the most important and sensitive issues. We aimed for the most inclusive, engaged and transparent process possible and enabled consultation and feedback at various stages of the process.”

Once the working group had drafted sections of the guidelines, these were available for comment before being incorporated and ratified by the principal and school board.

This level of consultation kept the school community on-board and enthusiastic about the healthy food and drink approach expected at the school.

“We are seeing tastebuds slowly changing, with interest in new foods that are offered at the canteen, grown in our garden, and used in cooking classes,” said Gadia.

In fact, the kids spontaneously cheered at the offer of free fruit at the launch of North Ainslie’s healthy food and drink guidelines!

“We made a big ‘shebang’ when we launched the guidelines at a whole school assembly featuring Kulture Break,” said Gadia. “We sent home a hard copy of the guidelines to every family.”

North Ainslie Primary School has proven that a combination of a supportive community, along with the school’s commitment to making healthy changes, provides the best platform to create functional guidelines that they have since aligned with the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy (2015)*.

*Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved. Fresh Tastes is part of the ACT Government’s Healthy Weight Initiative supporting a healthy, active and productive community.*