

## **INQUIRY INTO CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY**

**Organisation:** NSW Department of Education

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**RESPONSE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY  
ON CHILDHOOD OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY**

**18 AUGUST 2016**

**(a) Current approaches to reduce childhood overweight and obesity in NSW**

- The NSW Department of Education delivers education programs in NSW public schools that support children and young people to lead active and healthy lifestyles. Physical activity and teaching about healthy food choices are key contributors to the Department's support for the Premier's priority to reduce overweight and obesity rates in children.
- Live Life Well @ School is a healthy eating and physical activity program for NSW primary schools. Its main aims are to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching about healthy eating and developing physical activity lessons as part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education curriculum which is compulsory in years K- 10. Since its inception in 2008, over 2000 primary schools have participated in the workshops and conferences that have occurred across the State. Six new modules of online learning accredited against teacher professional standards are to be launched before the end of 2016.
- The NSW Healthy Canteen Strategy was first implemented in 2004 and is implemented in canteens in public schools. It is currently being revised by the three school education sectors and NSW Health and seeks to increase the availability of healthy foods and water, reduce the availability of unhealthy food and drinks and encourage smaller portion sizes that are more consistent with dietary recommendations. The revised strategy will be launched at the beginning of the 2017 school year.
- The revised Sport and Physical Activity Policy implemented on 27 February 2015 increased the mandatory weekly time for school sport and physical activity from 120 to 150 minutes per week. It specifies the activity level as moderate to vigorous.
- Students and staff are encouraged to participate in the NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge, a 10 week sport and physical activity challenge.
- Representative School Sport Pathway offers a wide range of sports for students to participate in at local, state, national and international level through carnivals, knockouts and representative teams. Some schools participate in this as part of their weekly timetabled school sport.
- Students in Years 2 to 6 are encouraged to participate in the School Swimming and Water Safety Program. The program provides opportunities for students to attend daily swimming lessons of 45 minutes over 10 consecutive days.

**(b) Strategies to assist parents and carers in enabling their children to make healthier food and beverage choices and be active, including by participating in sport**

- Parent Fact Sheets are available to schools which promote the benefits of sport and physical activity.
- Fresh fruits are provided at state sporting carnivals for participants and spectators to promote fresh food consumption.

**(c) Measures to support 13 to 18 year olds to make healthier food and beverage choices and be active, including by participating in sport**

- In NSW public schools, education about food, nutrition and physical activity is part of the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) key learning area. PDHPE is mandatory for all students in Kindergarten to Year 10 across both the government and non-government schooling sectors.
- The focus of the school curriculum is on the development of students' skills in making appropriate personal health choices throughout their lives. Through PDHPE, students are provided with opportunities to participate in physical activity and learn about nutrition, healthy eating, lifelong physical activity and active lifestyles. This makes a unique contribution to supporting the development of the student as a whole person. The syllabus documents for Kindergarten to Year 6 and Years 7-10 can be found at <http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/>.
- Students have access to a wide range of programs to promote healthy eating and active living. This includes the NSW Premier's Sporting Challenge and participation in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate with some vigorous physical activity per week through School Sport and PDHPE.

**(d) Strategies to support health professionals to identify and address childhood overweight and obesity**

Not applicable.

**(e) Coordination between NSW Government agencies to reduce childhood overweight and obesity**

- The Department of Education has strong partnerships and links with the Ministry of Health, for example in contributing to the Healthy Eating Active Living Strategy, delivering Live Life Well @ School, and the Healthy Canteen Strategy. The Department is also working closely with Transport for NSW and the Ministry of Health to encourage students to increase their active travel to and from school.
- A new relationship is being established between the Department of Education and the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People to ensure that student perspectives, often referred to as "student voice", are sought and included when developing new policies and programs, including those affecting overweight and obesity.

**(f) The potential for collaboration on strategies to reduce childhood overweight and obesity with the non-government and private sectors**

- There is ongoing collaboration on strategies to reduce childhood overweight and obesity across government, Catholic and Independent schools, for example, the Department is working closely with the non-government schooling sector in the review of the Healthy Canteen Strategy.

**(g) Any other related matter**

- All school-based staff are required to complete a child protection update each year. From 2016 this includes mandatory training focussed on obesity as a child protection issue. Using case studies, staff explore processes for making decisions about parental care that creates risk, and the need for child centred practice and for working constructively with other agencies to support students where obesity is a health and/or child protection matter, for example, through exchanging information.