** Springfield Lakes State School Brain Break Policy**

***RATIONALE/BELIEF ABOUT LEARNING***

It has been recognised through research that people regularly need food and water to

maintain high level brain function. This has important implications for students in our

schools. John Joseph, (one of SA’s leading exponents for increasing the potential of

the brain to learn), has been a strong advocate for students being able to nibble on

brain food and drink water throughout the school day.

“….brains run better on a “nibbling diet”. Nibblers were shown to have better

cognitive functioning, fewer discipline problems, lower cortisol levels, better glucose

tolerance and better maintained insulin levels. Some South Australian schools have

reported significant drops in behaviour problems and increased learning performance

since making nibbling food available at various times of the day”.

*(John Joseph – Focus Education “Food for Thought: The Critical Foundation for*

*Brain Care”).*

For a young developing brain the most important meal of the day is breakfast. The

metabolic rate in the brain increases soon after the alertness chemicals move us out of

sleep patterns and into daytime cycles. An increase in blood flow to the brain will

ensure that nutrients are carried to the brain for conversion into chemicals. Brain cells

require fuel (through glucose) to operate effectively and water to keep them hydrated.

Proteins also boost brain alertness while carbohydrates induce calmness or relaxation.

Research shows that a significant number of Australian children miss breakfast or eat

foods before school that are not ideal for optimum brain function. For some others,

particularly during periods of growth, the wait until recess time can also cause a

decrease in energy and brain function. The brain also needs a regular supply of water

as it is made up of approximately 80% water. Throughout learning, it is vital to keep

the brain in top working order.

Springfield Lakes State School has a 2.5 hour block before recess, which is a long morning of learning before first break. This means that for children who eat breakfast early in the day, it may be as long as four hours before the opportunity to eat brain food arises again and for those who eat no breakfast at all, the time elapsed since the last meal could be as long as 18 hours.

***ROLE OF TEACHERS***

Staff at Springfield Lakes State School will:

Provide a mid-morning brain break time for students. (The time needs to be

flexible due to the variety of activities in which students participate over any

given week). Brain break time is not a play break. It is a time when students

are encouraged to eat small amounts of brain-healthy food that helps maintain

the glucose supply to the brain. This break may occur whilst you are reading to children or eating whilst they are working.

* Allow students access to water bottles on desks to enable them to have regular

sips of water throughout the day.

* Ensure students are seated when they are eating food or drinking water.
* SLSS encourage and promote healthy brain break food options, but we cannot deny the child the right to eat if they do not have healthy food options in their lunchbox. Some food in a child’s stomach is still better for their brain than no food at all.

A hungry child will have decreased motivation, brain function and engagement with learning.

***ROLE OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS***

It is expected that students will arrive at school having eaten breakfast.

Parents/Caregivers are also asked to ensure children have a water bottle filled with water only, for use in the classroom, each day.

Appropriate Brain Break Foods are generally unprocessed and ensure a slow release of

glucose rather than a quick fix provided by high sugar/fat filled foods, which do not

sustain the consistent glucose input the brain requires. At SLSS we encourage and promote healthy eating but we also understand that some children have allergies and have sensory needs in relation to dietary requirements.

Examples of preferred Brain Break Foods include:

·Fresh fruit and vegetable

·Dried fruit (eg apricots, prunes, raisins and sultanas)

·Rice cakes

·Plain unsalted popcorn

·Seeds (eg sunflower, sesame, tahini, linseed and pepitas)

·Chick peas and other legumes

·Cheese sticks/cubes

·Boiled eggs (already shelled)

·Yoghurt

***LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS***

Children will:

·Develop higher level brain function

·Have more energy to learn

·Be more engaged in their learning thus reducing behaviour concerns

·Experience more success with learning

·Begin to develop lifelong skills around healthy eating and lifestyles