

No cake for you: Schools' sugar ban



Lauren Cauchi, 9, Liam Masters, 6, Chloe Psaltis, 6, and Julian Kausei, 5, enjoy a healthy lunch at Our Lady of the Angels school. Picture: Justin Lloyd

CHRISTOPHER HARRIS
EDUCATION WRITER

SCHOOLS are warning parents that children caught with sweet treats in their lunch box face having them confiscated because excessive amounts of sugar are unhealthy and can trigger mood swings and disagreements with other kids.

But nutritionists say a strict ban on sugary food could backfire as it makes children want it more.

Sydney Montessori School in Gymea has a blanket ban on any kind of sugar because it can trigger a storm of anger.

"We ask that parents not send lollies, chocolate, sugary snacks, fizzy drinks or anything of this nature to school

as they may cause allergic or behavioural reactions, disagreements between the children, or raised sugar levels resulting in mood swings," the school handbook states.

"If teachers see children with such items, they may be confiscated."

Al Noori Muslim School in Greenacre sends a compliance letter to parents of students caught with an "excessive unhealthy lunch box".

Public schools are also cracking down on sugary foods. Blackwell Public School in St Clair in Sydney's west has instructed parents to limit not only sugary items but also the sheer amount of food in the lunch box.

"Please do not send too

much food as some students are having difficulty eating it all and often miss out on playtime," a note to Kindergarten parents said.

Goulburn South Public has asked parents to send "pencils and erasers" instead of a communal cake for children to share on their birthday, while Melrose Park Public in Sydney's north has asked parents to cough up cash for a book for the library instead of a cake.

"From Term 2 if you wish to acknowledge your child's birthday at school please 'gift' a book to the classroom library," the school said.

The policy came in amid Covid restrictions and increasing number of children

with allergies and is not compulsory.

Nutritionist Kristen Beck said she had been shamed by teachers for one of her children eating muesli bars, but said it was not always the best way to make children eat healthier.

"Sometimes teachers tend to get a little bit overboard with getting too strict with what they can and can't eat," she said. "If you continually demonise sugary foods, kids just want it more so when they do get access, they get overly excited."

"I can understand why teachers find sugar problematic, but it needs to be judged in the whole context, especially if the kid is a healthy

weight and runs around and does lots of exercise."

At Rouse Hill, Our Lady of the Angels Primary Year 1 student Liam Masters said he liked eating vegemite sandwiches and "a cut up apple", while his classmate Chloe Psaltis who likes grapes and strawberries said she liked eating healthy food.

"If you eat healthy you won't get a sore tummy or holes in your teeth," Chloe said.

Year 4 student Lauren Cauchi said eating bad food all the time can become a bad habit.

"When you eat healthy it's good for your body because some foods have potassium and vitamins," Lauren said.

'Fears' bike path in Glebe will stay

LACHLAN LEEMING

POP-up cyclepaths erected under emergency Covid orders which expire at the end of this month are set to remain in place, including a controversial route along Glebe's Bridge Rd which "every resident fears".

Six supposedly temporary cycleways sprung up in 2020 under powers flexed by the NSW government in a bid to provide a greener, safer way for commuters to get around during the pandemic.

But nearly two years on, the bike paths are set to stay, with the government refusing to rule out leaving the paths under their control in place, despite the Covid orders ending at the end of the month.

A Transport for NSW spokeswoman said no decision has been made whether paths on Glebe's Bridge Rd and Sydney Park Rd, which are controlled by the department, would be removed by March 31, leaving the door open for them to remain.

"Transport for NSW is currently working through the decision-making process and expects to be in a position to announce the future of the project in the coming weeks," she said. "Transport for NSW will continue to work with local residents to minimise impacts as much as possible."

The prospect of the paths remaining has drawn angst from locals, who have complained over a lack of consultation, persistent safety issues and low usage since they were introduced in 2020.

Di Anstey, the head of residents' group Bridge Road Friends, slammed suggestions the community had been consulted on the path becoming permanent and said: "Every resident in Glebe fears it becoming permanent ... It's simply the wrong road for a cycleway - it's an arterial road."

The City of Sydney last year passed plans to keep pop-up cycleways on city-controlled roads until May 2023. Paths on Moore Park Rd and Fitzroy St will remain until construction is finished on a permanent cycleway on Oxford St, despite fears from Mardi Gras organisers that the concrete separating barrier would be a trip hazard and hamper marshalling and emergency vehicles during the event's parade.

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TODAY

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Cloudy. Rain.

TOMORROW

MAX 25

Rain.

FRIDAY

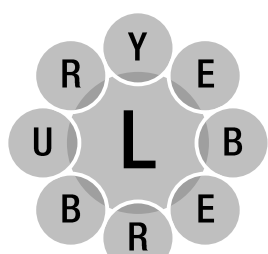
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WORD PUZZLE



In making a word each letter may be used only once, and the centre letter must be included. No slang, hyphens, apostrophes or plurals ending in 's'. Minimum four letters. Good 16, Very good 21, Excellent 30

LAST PUZZLE'S ANSWERS

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