



Crunch&Sip[®]

CASE STUDY TEA GARDENS PUBLIC SCHOOL



About the school

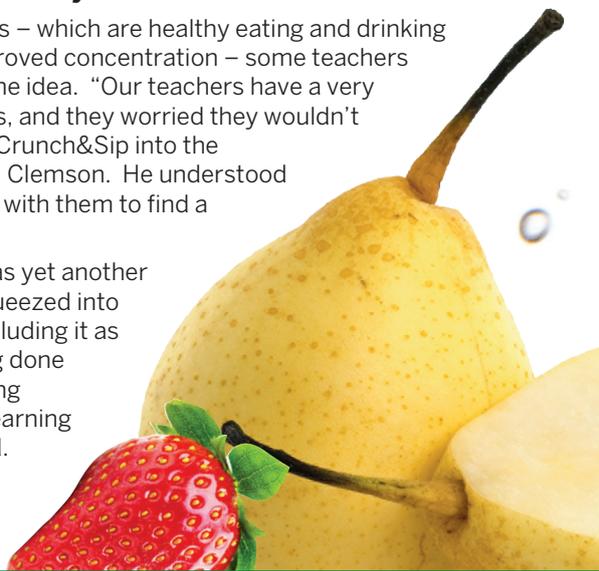
Tea Gardens Public School is located on the north shore of Port Stephens and serves the towns of Tea Gardens, Hawks Nest and surrounding districts.

Just under 250 students attend in nine classes across Kindergarten to year six. Community involvement and support at the school is one of its main strengths along with a school parliament run by student representatives from all years. Whilst there is a curriculum focus on literacy and numeracy, students are supported in many other areas, including music, sport and educating the whole child.

When Mark Clemson started as the Principal at Tea Gardens Public School in June last year, one of the things he wanted to implement at his new school was the Crunch&Sip program. "I had seen Crunch&Sip in many variations and operating successfully at a variety of schools and I wanted to see it happen at Tea Gardens," he says.

Despite the benefits to kids – which are healthy eating and drinking more water as well as improved concentration – some teachers were initially resistant to the idea. "Our teachers have a very crowded curriculum as it is, and they worried they wouldn't find the time to introduce Crunch&Sip into the classroom," says Principal Clemson. He understood their dilemma and worked with them to find a solution.

"Rather than looking at it as yet another element that had to be squeezed into the day, we focused on including it as part of the lesson, or being done during news time and taking advantage of the shared learning opportunity," he explained.



“Crunch&Sip gives us a great opportunity to make our school a more vibrant learning community,” says Principal Clemson.

Communicating with parents

Once the teachers were on board, it was time to talk to the parents. “I spoke to the local health representative at New England Area Health and he offered to come out and deliver a 30 minute education session to parents on Crunch&Sip prior to our P&C meeting, so I jumped at the opportunity,” he said.

The education session went really well. The teachers needed parents to know they couldn’t send in large pieces of fruit, such as half a rockmelon or half a pineapple. The snack needed to be appropriately sized for the appetite of the child as well as cut up and ready to eat. Once parents understood what they could and couldn’t pack, they were more than happy for the program to be implemented.



The end result

Crunch&Sip is now embraced at Tea Gardens Public School. “The majority of the teachers do it at 10am, while there’s one that prefers to do it at the end of the day – it’s whatever suits them,” explains the principal. Nowadays, even the teachers who were initially resistant to the program can see the benefits – the kids concentrate better and are more focused. The program has long-term benefits too, as it teaches kids life-long healthy eating habits that will hopefully stick with them. “The increased awareness of what is a good or bad food, as well as the focus on water is really beneficial,” says the Principal Clemson who encourages other schools to try the program.



Equity platter for all

If a student is unable to bring in a piece of fruit or veg for Crunch&Sip, they don’t have to miss out. Everyday a platter is put together to help in this situation. Tea Gardens Public School runs a Red Cross Breakfast club (the local BiLo donates food to the club) and there is always fruit leftover from breakfast that makes it onto the platter. “Plus, we have a veggie garden in the school and we often have cherry tomatoes and snow peas. If a child doesn’t bring a Crunch&Sip snack, they just come and choose something from the platter,” says Principal Clemson.



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