From little things, big healthy habits grow. Students at Comet Bay Primary School are planting the seeds to a better future with their focus on eating right, keeping active and looking after their mental health.

Principal Matt Osborne said children grow their own fruit and vegetables in the school’s Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden, tend to chooks that lay eggs every day and harvest their own fish.

He said some students mistakenly believed carrots and tomatoes “came from Woolworths”. “Some kids haven’t worked out that they come out of the ground so they’re seeing it grow in the garden and that’s an education in itself,” he said. “The healthy eating is only one element of our health-promoting school’s strategy.”

Mr Osborne said the school used “peer pressure positively” to encourage children to try previously unpopular vegetables, like eggplant. And students ate their lunch under supervision with prizes for the healthiest options in a bid to take the eat-right message home.

“It all starts in kindy – our kindy teachers are rather strict and they try to educate the parents early on about healthy eating and healthy lunches,” he said. “If a kid comes to school with Burger Rings and a Coke or something, well that goes home and we ring the parents. “We’re pretty proactive in making sure that we send those messages home and at the end of the day we just want healthy kids and we want their parents to help model those good eating habits.”

Mr Osborne said the school was also committed to promoting mental health and building resilient children to stamp out bullying.

Yasmine Phillips