

## **Food Safety, Nutrition and Beverages Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

This Policy details the Centre's approach to mealtimes when the food and beverages consumed by children while at the Centre are provided by the Centre. It also describes the way educators use mealtimes for a happy and social occasion, and for developing lifelong healthy food choices.

### **Links to Education and Care Centres National Regulations 2018, National Quality Standard 2018**

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#### **Regulations**

- 77** Health, hygiene and safe food practices
- 78** Food and beverages
- 79** Service providing food and beverages
- 80** Weekly Menu
- 90** Medical conditions policy
- 91** Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
- 160** Child enrolment records to be kept by approved provider
- 162** Health information to be kept in enrolment record
- 168** Education and care service must have policies and procedures
- 170** Policies and Procedures to be followed
- 171** Policies and procedures to be kept available
- 172** Notification of change to policies or procedures
- 173 (2)(f)** Prescribed information to be displayed—education and care service other than a family day care service

#### **National Quality Standards**

QA 2- Children's Health & Safety (2.1, 2.1.2, & 2.1.3)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012

Individual medical management plans and related resources

### **Procedures**

- At enrolment, parents provide the Centre with details of their child's food and drink allergies and of any cultural preferences in food. The enrolment form has provision for parents to provide the Centre with details of any special dietary requirements (e.g. allergies, culture, religion, food preferences). Parents are asked to update this information when any changes occur via the OWNA app where all enrolment information is located.
- A menu will be developed using the principles set out in the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents and reviewed on a regular basis every 6 months. All amendments made will be recorded
- The menu will be on display for families and children to view at any time.
- Snack times are seen as a social event where children and staff can relax, talk about their day and experience a variety of foods. Staff will demonstrate good health and hygienic eating habits whilst with the children
- Children should be seated whilst eating and drinking to reinforce positive role modelling and to minimise spillage.

- Children and parents are encouraged to make suggestions and regularly contribute to the menu by sharing family recipes and cultural ideas.
- All family and multicultural practices will be acknowledged and addressed in the provision of food
- The Centre maintains a list and photographs of children with special food requirements for health or medical reasons (e.g. allergies, intolerances). This information is displayed in the office area and in the kitchen area. Relief staff are informed of these dietary requirements when they begin their shift.
- Education of healthy eating habits will be developed through ongoing example, specific activities, notices, posters and information sheets to parents
- The denial of food will never be used as a punishment
- The vacation care program provides opportunities to provide the children with engaging cooking activities. These experiences will be linked to the children's current interests and learning program.
- Children are encouraged to eat, but they are not required to taste new foods, to eat food they do not like or to eat more than they want.
- Meal times are relaxed, pleasant and unhurried. Educators sit and eat with the children, maintaining good personal nutrition, and talk with them on topics of interest, including, but not limited to, healthy food and nutrition.
- Staff are encouraged to attend professional development on nutrition and food safety every 12 months
- Follow the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) for serving sizes and different types of food

## **FOOD AND HYGIENE**

- All food will be prepared and stored in a hygienic manner
- When children are involved in food preparation this should always be supervised and hygienic conditions maintained. Children will be asked to apply sanitiser to their hands and gloves worn if necessary.
- Food will be stored in tightly sealed containers away from any chemicals
- Food requiring refrigeration will be stored in the temperature controlled refrigerator
- Kitchen equipment is to be cleaned and stored appropriately
- Staff and children use the sanitiser before preparing or serving food. Gloves are worn during food preparation and serving if required.
- Surfaces are cleaned before and or after food preparation
- All perishable foods should be stored in the refrigerator and the temperature should be monitored to ensure it is less than 5 degrees C.
- The service will review and evaluate food handling and practices
- Educators seek children's opinion of the menu.

- Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. (Foodsafety.gov, 2019). Our OSHC Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

During warmer weather, the risk of foodborne illnesses increases. Our OSHC Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning including:

- maintaining proper temperature control for perishable foods
- ensuring refrigerators are set to recommended temperature of 5 °C or below, regularly monitoring and recording temperatures to guarantee food safety
- emphasising hand hygiene for staff and children and encourage frequent handwashing before and after meals
- implementing food safety practices to minimise the risk of cross-contamination
- ensuring staff are aware of heightened increase in allergic reactions and maintain consistent allergen management
- consider the impact of the sun on food safety when eating meals outside
- use insulated containers to keep perishable food cool and avoid leaving food exposed to direct sunlight.

### ***Before School Care***

Breakfast will only be offered to children that are early arrivals between the following times:

- 7.00am – 7:45am only
- water will be available to all children at all times

Arrivals after this time are assumed breakfast has been offered at home and staff will be unable to cater after this time due to scheduled morning routines.

The service has implemented a breakfast bar where children are able to serve themselves cereal for breakfast with educators supervision.

### ***After School Care***

Afternoon tea will be offered to all children participating in the After School Care program and a late afternoon snack for late departures and they will be offered between the following times:

- 3.05pm – 3.30pm (menu will be available weekly for parents perusal)
- 5:20pm – 5:40pm

Children will be encouraged to serve themselves if possible, whilst ensuring all children have equal access to food.

## **Vacation Care**

- During Vacation Care, parents will be asked to provide their children's morning tea, afternoon tea, lunch and drinks, unless otherwise stated on the program. Breakfast will be offered only to early arrivals between the following times:- 7.30am – 8.15am only (this will include toast or cereal only)
- Water will be available to all children at all times. Children will be encouraged to bring their own drink bottles that can be refilled throughout the day if necessary.
- Any food provided by the Centre will be prepared and stored in a hygienic manner.
- Where children are involved in food preparation, this should always be supervised and hygienic conditions maintained.
- Food will be stored in tightly sealed containers, away from any chemicals.
- Food requiring refrigeration will be stored in the refrigerator.
- Children should be seated whilst eating or drinking.
- The denial of food will never be used as a punishment.
- Containers are to be cleaned and stored appropriately.
- We will provide nutritious and varied food of good quality in the centre
- Children will be encouraged to develop good eating habits through good examples and education
- Parents will be encouraged to share family and multicultural values and ideas to enrich the variety and enjoyment of food by the children
- High standards of hygiene will be maintained throughout all food preparation

## **Food Safety**

Food will be prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Program. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements (i.e., local council registrations and inspections). The meal preparation area is located in the Department of Education school grounds and therefore undergoes regularly yearly inspections.

All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority. This includes implementation of the following;

- ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable towels or individual hand towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks
- ensure gloves (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5°C or above 60°C), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- ensure separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables, and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods
- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils

- ensure food-handling staff members attend relevant training courses and pass relevant information on to the rest of the staff.

In relation to the personal hygiene for food handlers;

- clean clothing is worn by food handlers (such as an apron or appropriate jacket)\
- long hair is tied back or covered with a net
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food (e.g. rings and bracelets)
- nails are kept short and clean and no nail polish is worn (as it can chip into food and hide dirt under the nails)
- strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties
- To uphold BEST PRACTICE gloves to be worn when handling food and tongs used
- wounds or cuts are covered with a brightly coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings
- staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

All Educators who are required to assist with the afternoon tea preparation will have completed the relevant food safety training and a food safety supervisor will be identified.

## **Buying and Transporting Food**

OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- ensure food supplies have been ordered in a timely manner
- always check labels for the 'use by' and 'best before' dates, understanding that 'use by' dates apply to perishable foods that could potentially cause food poisoning if out of date, whilst 'best before' dates refer to food items with long shelf life, but quality could be compromised
- avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging
- always check eggs within cartons: Never buy dirty or cracked eggs
- never buy any food item if unsure about its quality
- ensure fresh meat, chicken, or fish products cannot leak on to other food items
- ensure chilled, frozen, and hot food items are kept out of the 'danger zone' (5 °C to 60 °C) on the trip back to the Service by:
  - not getting chilled frozen, or hot food items until the end of the shopping.
  - placing these items in an insulated shopping bag or cooler
  - immediately unpacking and storing these items upon the return to the Service
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## **Storing Food**

OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 °C or below and the freezer is maintained at -17 °C or below
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked and recorded daily (*See Refrigeration Temperature Control Register*)
- store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods
- ensure fresh meat is not stored in the fridge for more than 3 days
- ensure that all foods stored in the refrigerator are stored in strong food-safe containers with either a tight-fitting lid, or tightly applied plastic wrap or foil
- ensure that all foods not stored in their original packaging are labelled with:
  - the name of the food
  - the 'use by' date
  - the date the food was opened
  - details of any allergens present in the food
- transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate containers
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- place 'left-over' hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as the steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing in smaller quantities in shallow containers, reducing the amount of time sitting in the 'danger zone'
- not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers)
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging.
- store dry foods in cupboards or if in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor
- not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry (as containers of any type create easy access to shelves for mice and rats)
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- use the FIFO (first in, first out) rule for all foods (dry, chilled, and frozen) to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separate to food items

## Preparing and Serving Food

### OUR OSHC SERVICE WILL:

- ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75 °C
- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5 °C until ready to serve
- discard any cooked food that has been left in the 'danger zone' for two or more hours. Do not reheat.
- reheat cooked food (if required, for example for a child who was sleeping at lunch time) to a temperature of 70 °C (but only ever reheat **once**. Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated).
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods

- ensure foods are defrosted in the fridge or microwave
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- ensure food that has been dropped on the floor is immediately discarded
- thoroughly clean kitchen utensils and equipment between using with different foods and/or between different tasks
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods
- avoid cross-contamination by ensuring that colour-coded cutting boards are used (note that it doesn't matter which colour you use for which food providing signs are displayed to alert all staff). Common colours are:
  - Blue: raw fish/seafood
  - Green: fruit and vegetables
  - Red: raw meat
  - Brown: cooked meat
  - Yellow: raw poultry
  - White: bakery and dairy
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks
- ensure that staff preparing food for children with food allergies or intolerances are proficient at reading ingredient labels
- ensure that food allergies and intolerances are catered for by using separate easily identifiable cutting boards, utensils, and kitchen equipment (e.g., using a colour code, or food-safe permanent marker)
- ensure that children with food allergies and/or intolerances are served their meals and snacks individually on an easily identifiable plate (e.g. different colour), and that food is securely covered with plastic wrap until received by the child to prevent possible cross-contamination
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- ensure staff responsible for preparing, serving and supervising food for children with food allergies undertake the *All about Allergens for Cooks and Chefs* and *All about Allergens for Children's Education and Care (CEC)* online courses- [Food Allergy Aware Training](#)
- ensure that a notice is displayed prominently in the main entrance of the OSHC Service stating that a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis is being cared for or educated at the Service, and provide details of the allergen/s (Reg. 173(2)(f)) [note: this notice should not identify the child]
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food
- ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away
- implement a two person check to ensure the '*right child gets the right meal*' for example: a checklist is developed to record children's names, their allergies, health needs

## Communicating with families

Our OSHC Service will:

- provide a copy of the *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* to all families upon orientation at the Service
- provide opportunities for families to contribute to the review and development of the policy
- request that details of any food allergies or intolerances or specific dietary requirements be provided to the OSHC Service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children's individual dietary needs are met
- display menus for families to view easily (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the Service and provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home.
- communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes- especially during Vacation Care. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including factsheets, newsletters, during orientation, information sessions and informal discussion.
- discuss discretionary choices- (food and beverages which are not necessary as part of a balanced diet) with families and if necessary, remove items from children's lunch boxes. Alternative healthy food will be offered to children.

#### **Where Food is Brought From Home:**

Our OSHC Service will:

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes and after school snacks
- provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels
- provide space in a refrigerator to keep lunchboxes or insulated lunch bags to be stored
- ensure insulated lunchboxes are unzipped to allow cool air to circulate
- encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided
- strongly discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt, and/or sugar, and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes. Examples of these foods include sweet biscuits, some muesli bars, breakfast bars and fruit filled bars, and chips.
- food items that should not be brought to the OSHC service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

#### **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION**

Our *Food, Nutrition and Beverages Policy* will be reviewed on an annual basis in consultation with children, families, staff, educators and management.



## Resources

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). [Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines](#).
- Australian Government Department of Education. [My Time, Our Place- Framework for School Age Care in Australia. V2.0, 2022](#)
- Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health- The Australian Dietary Guidelines* <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- *Food Act 2003*
- Food Authority NSW. (2023). [Food safety requirements for children's services in NSW](#).
- *Food Regulation 2015*
- Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2024): <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/business/food-safety-standards>
- *Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act 1991*
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2023). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Department of Health and Ageing. Infant Feeding Guidelines. (2013): [https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the\\_guidelines/n56b\\_infant\\_feeding\\_summary\\_130808.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf)
- National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
- NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>
- [Safe Food Australia \(NSW\)](#)
- The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>
- The Department of Health. Get Up & Grow: [Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Staff/Carers Book](#)

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