


# Policy

## Early Years Policy – Food Safety

<b>Date of Adoption</b>	New		
<b>Adoption Method</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Council	<input type="checkbox"/> CEO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Director Community
<b>Director Signature</b>	Signed by:  <small>A4566C08D5B4450...</small>		<b>Date</b> 20-11-2024
<b>Responsible Officer and Unit</b>	Samantha Waymouth, Coordinator Early Years Services		
<b>Nominated Review Period</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Annually	<input type="checkbox"/> Every 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please specify</i> )
<b>Last Endorsement Date</b>	New		
<b>Next Endorsement Date</b>	November 2025		

Macedon Ranges Shire Council acknowledges the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land and waterways. Council recognises their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. Council also acknowledges local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander residents of Macedon Ranges for their ongoing contribution to the diverse culture of our community.

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## Purpose/Objective

This policy provides guidelines for:

- effective food safety practices at Council's Early Years Services that comply with legislative requirements and meet best practice standards
- minimising the risk to children of scalds and burns from hot drinks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Early Years Policy - Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play.

## Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in handling, preparing, storing and serving food for consumption at Council Early Years Services, persons with management or control, nominated supervisors, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the Early Years Services.

## Background/Reasons for Policy

Food safety is very important in early childhood service environments. Young children are often more susceptible to the effects of foodborne illness than other members of the community. Foodborne illness (including gastrointestinal illness) can be caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses, chemicals or foreign objects that are present in food. Food provided by a children's service:

- must be fit for human consumption
- must not be adulterated or contaminated
- must not have deteriorated or perished.

Safe food practices can also assist in reducing the risk of a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) by preventing cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to Early Years policies: Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions; and Asthma).

Organisations that provide food to children have a duty of care (refer to Definitions) to protect children from all hazards and harm. Employers are also required, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, to provide a healthy and safe working environment for employees and

contractors, and to ensure that other individuals, including children, parents/guardians, visitors and the general public, are not endangered when attending the workplace. In addition, employees, visitors and contractors are responsible for complying with appropriate workplace standards and procedures that have been implemented to protect their own health and safety, and that of others.

The *Food Act 1984* aims to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness by ensuring that food manufactured, transported, sold, prepared and stored is safe, unadulterated, fit for human consumption and will not cause food poisoning. Under this act, local councils in Victoria are required to classify every food premises in their municipality according to its food safety risk.

Sessional kindergartens supplying low risk snacks such as cut fruit, milk, bread and cereals are classified as Class 4 (low risk). Class 4 services are not required to have:

- a food safety program
- a food safety supervisor
- an annual council inspection.

However, Class 4 services must ensure that staff members have the skills and knowledge needed to safely handle food in their work roles. Council may also, at its discretion, inspect a premises under the Food Act 1984 (e.g. to investigate complaints or conduct a spot check). Individual councils may also require services to complete a food safety audit or plan, especially when the service is operating a special event such as a sausage sizzle.

## Gender Impact Assessment

In accordance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, a Gender Impact Assessment was not required in relation to the subject matter of this policy.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Communicable Disease Section	Responsible for communication and advice in relation to infectious diseases on behalf of the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Health.

<p>Department of Health</p>	<p>The Victorian State Government department responsible for the health and wellbeing of Victorians, and with oversight of the administration of the Food Act 1984.</p>
<p>Food allergies</p>	<p>Some foods and food ingredients, or their components, can cause severe allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis (refer to Early Years Policy - Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions). Less common symptoms of food allergy include infantile colic, reflux of stomach contents, eczema, chronic diarrhoea and failure to thrive in infants. Food allergies are often caused by peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish and shellfish, soy and wheat. For more information on food allergies, visit <a href="http://www.allergyfacts.org.au">www.allergyfacts.org.au</a></p>
<p>Food safety</p>	<p>In relation to this policy, food safety means ensuring food provided by the service is fit for human consumption.</p>
<p>Food safety program</p>	<p>A written plan that details what an individual business does to ensure that the food it sells or handles is safe for human consumption. A food safety program is an important tool for businesses that handle, process or sell potentially hazardous foods, as it helps to maintain safe food handling practices and protect public health. It should identify potential hazards in all aspects of food handling, describe how such hazards can be controlled/monitored, and define appropriate corrective action to be taken when a hazard is found to be under-managed. A food safety program must also include the requirements for appropriate record keeping. Class 4 services are not required to have a food safety program (refer to Background).</p>
<p>Food safety supervisor</p>	<p>A person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● can recognise, prevent and alleviate food handling hazards at a premises</li> <li>● has a Statement of Attainment from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that confirms competency in the required food safety standards</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has the ability and authority to supervise other individuals who handle food at the premises to ensure safe food handling at all times.</li> </ul> <p>Class 4 food premises do not need a food safety supervisor (refer to Background). However, they must ensure that staff members have the skills and knowledge needed to safely handle food in their work roles.</p>
Hazardous food	Food containing dangerous biological, chemical or physical agents, or food in a condition that has the potential to cause adverse health effects in humans.
Hot drink	Any container holding a liquid that has been heated or boiled, and that remains above room temperature (25°C) for any period of time.
Scalds	Burns by hot fluids, steam and other hot vapours.

## References

- > A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children’s centres - Communicable Disease Section, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (2019): <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/A-guide-to-the-management-and-control-of-gastroenteritis-outbreaks-in-childrens-centres>
- > Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>
- > Department of Health - Food Safety <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety>
- > Food – how to keep it safe <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-how-to-keep-it-safe>
- > Food safety library: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/publications-guides-resources>
- > Do food safely – a free online food safety program: <http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/>

- > The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne – Kids Health Info:  
<https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/>
- > Kidsafe Australia – Fires, Burns and Scalds <https://www.kidsafevic.com.au/home-safety/fire-safety-burns-and-scalds/>

## Related Policies

- > Early Years Policy - Administration of First Aid
- > Early Years Policy - Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions
- > Early Years Policy - Asthma
- > Early Years Policy - Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- > Early Years Policy - Dealing with Medical Conditions
- > Early Years Policy - Diabetes
- > Early Years Policy - Excursions and Service Events
- > Early Years Policy - Hygiene
- > Early Years Policy - Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- > Early Years Policy - Interactions with Children
- > Early Years Policy - Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play
- > Early Years Policy - Staffing Requirements
- > Early Years Policy - Supervision of Children
- > Occupational Health and Safety Policy (Council)

## Related Legislation

- > *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- > *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

- > *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*
- > *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- > *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*
- > *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety*
- > *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- > *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

## Responsibilities

Non – mandatory (Class 4 Food Services)

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
<b>R</b> indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor, staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service ( <i>Regulation 77(1)(2)</i> )	R				
Contacting the local council in the service’s area of operation to determine the service’s food safety risk classification and requirements under the Food Act 1984	R	✓			
Complying with all requirements of the service’s food safety risk classification under the Food Act 1984, as outlined by local council, including implementing a food safety program and employing a food	R	✓	✓		✓



Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
safety supervisor if required (refer to Background and References)					
Providing parents/guardians with a copy of this policy (via Council website), and with up-to-date information on the safe provision of food for their children (refer to References)	R	✓			
Ensuring that the nominated supervisor and all staff are provided with a copy of this policy and are kept up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policies, information and resources relating to food safety	R				
Ensuring students, volunteers, casuals and relief staff at the service are informed of this policy	R	✓			✓
Ensuring that staff undergo training in safe food handling, as required	R	✓	✓		✓
Monitoring staff compliance with food safety practices (refer to References)	R	✓			
Encouraging volunteers to complete training in safe food handling techniques as required (refer to References)	R	✓			✓
Ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained at the service (refer to References and Early Years Policy - Hygiene)	R	✓	✓		✓
Being aware of safe food practices and good hygiene practices (refer to References and Early Years Policy - Hygiene), and undergoing training if required	R	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Displaying hygiene guidelines/posters and food safety guidelines/posters in the food areas of the service for the reference of staff and families involved in the preparation and distribution of food to children (refer to References and Early Years Policy - Hygiene)	R	✓			
Ensuring that this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other service events	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to Early Years policies - Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions; and Asthma)	R	✓	✓		✓
Identifying potential hazards that may reasonably be expected to occur at each stage of the food-handling and preparation cycle and developing procedures to minimise these hazards. Stages of the cycle include ordering, delivery, storage, thawing, preparation, cooking, cooling, handling post-cooking, reheating and serving	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that all facilities and equipment for food preparation and storage are clean, and in good repair and working order	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that children’s lunchboxes are kept indoors, away from heat sources (including direct sunlight) and refrigerated if necessary (except for during snack and lunch breaks)	R	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Packing a cold item, such as a frozen water bottle, with perishable foods in a child's lunchbox, or using an insulated lunchbox or cooler				✓	
Providing a calibrated thermometer in good working order, suitable for monitoring the temperature of the fridge/freezer in food preparation areas. Glass thermometers containing mercury are not recommended in or near food preparation areas	R	✓			
Contacting the local council to determine requirements prior to selling food at a fête, food stall or other service event. Such requirements may include completing a Food Act notification form and/or a statement of trade form	R	✓			
Monitoring pests and vermin from the premises	R	✓			
Contacting the Communicable Disease Section of the Department of Health (refer to Definitions) if there is an outbreak of two or more cases of gastrointestinal illness in a 48-hour period (refer to References)	R	✓			
Informing the Department of Education and parents/guardians if an outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning occurs at the service	R	✓			
Informing families of the availability of cold storage facilities at the service to ensure parents/guardians make suitable food choices when supplying food for their own child, or for children to share	✓	✓	✓		

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Ensuring staff, parents/guardians and others attending the service are aware of the acceptable and responsible practices for the consumption of hot drinks (refer to Attachment 1)	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring parents/guardians provide details of their child’s specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) on the enrolment form, and discussing these prior to the child commencing at the service and whenever these requirements change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety	✓	✓	✓		✓
Discussing food safety with children to increase awareness and assist in developing safe practices		✓	✓		✓
Discouraging children from sharing drink bottles or cups at the service		✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that children do not share lunches to minimise risks in relation to children with food allergies		✓	✓		✓
Providing adequate supervision of children while they are eating (refer to Early Years Policy - Supervision of Children)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Teaching children to wash and dry their hands (refer to Early Years Policy - Hygiene):  ● before touching or eating food		✓	✓	✓	✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● after touching chicken or raw meat</li> <li>● after using the toilet</li> <li>● after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing</li> <li>● after playing with an animal/pet</li> </ul>					
Encouraging parents/guardians to discuss a child’s nutritional requirements, food allergies or food sensitivities, and informing the teacher where necessary		✓	✓	✓	✓
Seeking input from parents/guardians on cultural values or religious expectations regarding food handling, provision and consumption		✓	✓	✓	✓
Informing the nominated supervisor or approved provider of any outbreaks of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning at the service (refer to early Years Policy - Dealing with Infectious Diseases)		✓	✓		✓
Removing hazardous food (refer to Definitions), including food that has fallen on the floor, and providing alternative food items		✓	✓		✓
Documenting and implementing a food safety program (refer to Definitions), if required	R	✓	✓		
Maintaining good personal and kitchen hygiene (refer to References and Early Years Policy - Hygiene)	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Washing hands prior to participating in food preparation and cooking activities		✓	✓		✓
Washing all fruits and vegetables thoroughly (if provided by the service)		✓	✓		✓
Covering all wounds/cuts on hands or arms with wound strips or bandages		✓	✓		✓
Wearing disposable gloves when handling food		✓	✓		✓

## Evaluation

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- monitor and investigate any issues related to food safety, such as reports of gastroenteritis or food poisoning
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy, including parents/guardians, at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (*Regulation 172 (2)*).

## Attachments

- Attachment 1: Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service (D23-78121)