



FOOD SAFETY POLICY

SUB CATEGORY: Health, Hygiene and Safety

POLICY GOAL

To ensure steps are taken to protect children from illness associated with the preparation, storage or serving of food. To ensure educators are provided with clear guidelines to meet food safety requirements.

RATIONALE

Young children's immune systems are not fully developed, and food safety guidelines should be followed whenever preparing food for them.

"Safe food handling is essential for preventing the spread of germs and disease in the kitchen. Remember to keep the following rules in mind whenever you prepare or cook food, in order to keep your family healthy and free from disease.

1. *Always wash your hands thoroughly before you start preparing food.*
2. *Do not handle food with bare hands – use gloves instead.*
3. *Do not handle food if you are sick or have cuts or sores on your hands.*
4. *Keep hot foods hot (>60°C) and keep cold foods cold (<5°C).*
5. *Defrost food in the fridge or microwave.*
6. *Do not refreeze thawed food.*
7. *Store food appropriately.*
8. *Do not overload the fridge.*
9. *Clean and sanitize your cooking or storage area after preparing or storing raw food.*
10. *Never smoke in food areas.*
11. *Clean the entire cooking area regularly and thoroughly.*
12. *Eradicate pests, as they carry germs."*¹

"Contamination in food can include:

- *foreign bodies – hair, pieces of metal or other objects accidentally picked up during the preparation and cooking process*
- *chemicals from the food production process, or cleaning materials*
- *natural contaminants, such as toxins*
- *contamination from pests*
- *bacteria.*

Children are particularly vulnerable to illnesses caused by foodborne organisms because of their less mature immune systems. In early childhood settings the larger the number of children being fed the larger the risk, because it is more difficult to handle larger quantities of food safely.

¹ "12 Golden Rules of Safe Food Handling", Nutrition Australia (accessed on-line April 2020)
http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/sites/default/files/Safe%20Food%20Handling_Printable%20PDF.pdf

Pathogenic bacteria can be common. If this form of bacteria is present in a sufficiently large amount it can cause food poisoning or gastro-enteritis.

Bacteria in foods

There are bacteria present in most foods. The only foods which have no bacteria are those produced synthetically in a sterile factory, or foods which have been heat-treated after preparation. Examples include canned foods and liquid baby formula. All other foods have some bacteria. Keeping food safe is about controlling the increase in the number of bacteria.

Food spoilage is often caused by bacteria, which can make food inedible and unpleasant but not necessarily harmful. Some bacteria however, called pathogens, are harmful. Pathogenic bacteria can be common. If this form of bacteria is present in a sufficiently large amount it can cause food poisoning or gastro-enteritis. These illnesses typically involve nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach cramps.

For bacteria to grow to a number large enough to cause illness, food must have nutrients for growth, moisture and be at a temperature that allows bacteria to reproduce quickly. The time interval between consuming harmful bacteria and showing symptoms of illness varies.

Different bacteria cause different illnesses. Some can cause very brief and mild illness, while others may lead to more serious illness and dehydration that can require hospitalisation. Food poisoning is especially serious in children and elderly people because their immune systems are more vulnerable, and they become dehydrated more easily.

The most common cause of gastro-enteritis is viral illness passed on through contact between people, rather than through food. These illnesses are very common, generally very acute and short term. Good hygiene, particularly hand-washing, is very important in limiting the spread of viral gastro-enteritis.

High-risk foods

Foods that allow the easy growth of bacteria are those that are moist and contain a lot of nutrients. These foods, called 'high-risk' foods, include milk, meat and fish, as well as any dishes containing them. Cooked rice also allows some bacteria to grow. If these foods are left out of the refrigerator for long periods of time, they will spoil but will only cause illness if they contain harmful pathogenic bacteria. Keeping food safe for consumption relies on controlling all aspects of food handling and any food-related conditions, to ensure that bacteria cannot reproduce and grow to large numbers.

Low-risk foods

Foods unlikely to encourage bacterial growth, or 'low-risk' foods, include uncooked pasta and rice, breads and biscuits, packaged snack foods, lollies and chocolates. These foods can be kept safely for long periods of time without refrigeration. Canned food is safe while the can is still sealed, but once opened the food may become high-risk. Lollies, chocolates and many packaged snack foods are 'sometimes foods' and should not be offered in the setting. Low-risk foods are useful for the store cupboard at early childhood settings but need to be combined with high-risk foods in an adequate eating pattern to provide proper nutrition.”²

² “Get up and Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Director/Coordinator Book”, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2009)(accessed on-line March

Children’s Cooking Classes

“Children love to cook. Cooking is a safe and enjoyable activity for children in education and care services, provided that you take a few simple precautions:

- Make sure children wash and dry their hands before and after the cooking class.
- Always be aware of the dangers of heat.
- Tie up any long hair.
- To reduce the chances of germs being spread through food, it is recommended that children only prepare food that will be cooked afterwards—any germs in the food will be destroyed when the food is cooked. However, if the food will not be cooked, this risk can be lowered if children only prepare food to eat themselves.
- If children have had vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not participate in cooking activities until they have been symptom-free for 48 hours. If the education and care service has recently had, or is currently experiencing, an outbreak of gastrointestinal disease, do not hold children’s cooking activities, and check with your local public health unit before resuming cooking activities.
- Foods suitable for cooking classes include cooked biscuits, fresh pasta, soups and pizza. These types of food will be cooked and exposed to high temperatures, killing any bacteria that may be in the food.
- Foods not suitable for cooking classes include fruit salad, biscuits or slices that do not need cooking, and jellies. These types of food are not cooked and therefore not exposed to high temperatures. Refrigeration does not kill germs.

Preparing food

Food is an excellent place for bacteria to grow. Germs, such as viruses, do not grow in foods but can still be passed from one person to another in food. Bacteria that are common on our skin and in the environment can cause food poisoning if allowed to grow to large numbers in food.

Australia’s food safety standards state that reheated food should reach 60°C. Heating to this temperature will destroy germs that may have grown in the food since it was cooked. However, it is recommended that food is reheated until it reaches 70 °C and should stay at this temperature for 2 minutes. This is because the education and care service may not know if the prepared food has been within the temperature ‘danger zone’ (5–60°C).

Use a food thermometer to ensure that cooked or reheated food reaches the correct temperature. Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is below 5°C. Check that the food has cooled before giving it to the child. Remove a small piece of food with a spoon to another plate and test the temperature of the food with your hand. Throw this piece of food away and wash the spoon. Throw out all leftovers. Tell parents what food their child left, but do not return the leftover food to the parents.”³

2019)[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF0001DADB3/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF0001DADB3/$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf)

³ “5th Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services” Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council 2013.

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure the safe and hygienic storage, handling, preparation and serving of all food and drinks consumed by children, including foods brought from home the following must be adhered to.

- Where meals are provided there should always be a person present on-site that holds a relevant qualification in food safety as per local and state and territory legislation. **Please note that MIC does not have a current food service license and so no preparation of food that is not an educational experience can be served to children.**
- Allergies and intolerances must be recorded and displayed in a number of locations, including the early learning kitchen area to ensure children's individual needs are met.
- Any person preparing or serving food must be provided with copies of Action Plans and Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans.
- Educators should follow advice from recognised authorities at all times, including those listed in this policy.
- While all care is taken to ensure foods prepared and served are free from known allergens, we cannot accept responsibility for undeclared allergens in food purchased or food packaged or produced in a way that may expose it to traces of allergens.
- **Children attending the early learning service within MIC must provide all daily meals. The Afternoon Program will provide full pieces of fruit and healthy snacks that require no food preparation, unless that food preparation is an educational experience provided in the Program.**

Personal Safety

- Educators must wash hands before handling food, and again during the preparation of food if hair is touched, after wiping the nose with a tissue, after sneezing or going to the toilet, or if other items which may carry bacteria are touched, this includes furniture, surfaces and fridge handles. Refer to the Handwashing Policy
- Educators are asked to limit jewellery worn as this can make washing hands less effective, where jewellery is worn, educators must pay closer attention to handwashing.
- There should always be an adequate supply of liquid soap and disposable towel for use when washing hands.
- Educators must cover cuts or wounds on hands make sure they are completely covered by a waterproof dressing (preferably a bright colour)
- The use of disposable gloves over the dressing will provide an extra level of protection.
- Staff should tie back long hair and wear a clean apron when working in the kitchen.
- Educators who have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea should not participate in food preparation until they have not had any symptoms for 48 hours.

Purchasing food

- Food may only be purchased from trusted suppliers.
- When buying fresh food, care should be taken to choosing food that looks fresh, from places where turnover is high.
- Staff purchasing or receiving food must ensure packages are unbroken and products are within the use-by date. (records must be kept)
- Temperature of cold and frozen foods must be measured upon delivery (records must be kept)

Kitchen safety

- Educators must ensure they keep all kitchen areas clean and are free from insects and other vermin
- Foods must be placed in sealed containers once their packages are open and expiry and opening dates recorded on the container.
- Where regular learning experiences are provided, educators must use separate boards for cutting raw meat and fish, cooked items such as meat and vegetables, and fruit. Colour code boards to identify their use.
- Knives and cooking utensils must be cleaned between using them for uncooked meat or fish and other foods.
- Educators should use a thermometer to test and record fridge temperatures at least twice daily to ensure it is 5°C or below. (records must be kept). This includes fridges in children's learning spaces as well as staff fridges and kitchen fridges. Freezers storing foods must also be tested and recorded as per the Food Safety Plan.

Cooking, heating, cooling and storing

- Educators must keep high-risk foods refrigerated before cooking, or until they are ready to be eaten.
- Educators should ensure that raw and cooked foods are stored separately in the fridge
- Meat and similar products must be stored on the bottom shelves in fridges to prevent them dripping onto other items.
- All fruits and vegetables must be washed thoroughly
- Food that is served and not eaten must be discarded.
- Educators must ensure that they keep food hot (over 60°C) or cold (5°C or less)
- Educators must follow the '**4-hour/2-hour rule**' - Ready to-eat food that has been at temperatures between 5°C and 60°C:
 - o for a total of less than 2 hours, must be refrigerated or used immediately (do not reheat milk/formula).
 - o for a total of longer than 2 hours but less than 4 hours, must be used immediately.
 - o for a total of 4 hours or longer, must be thrown out."
- **Educators at MIC are not to reheat any food to be served to children unless authorisation is provided by the Nominated Supervisor.** When reheating educators should follow these recommendations from "*5th Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services*":
 - o *It is recommended that food is reheated until it reaches 70 °C, and should stay at this temperature for 2 minutes*
 - o *Use a food thermometer to ensure that cooked or reheated food reaches the correct temperature.*
 - o *Keep a non-mercury thermometer in your fridge so that you can check that the temperature is below 5°C. Check that the food has cooled before giving it to the child.*
 - o *Throw out left-overs.*

Serving food safely

- Children and adults must wash hands before eating and serving food.
- Educators should use tongs and spoons for serving food. Where tongs are not used educators must either use gloves or have freshly washed hands.
- Children should have opportunities, age and developmentally appropriate, for serving themselves from shared platters. Tongs and other utensils suitable for children must be used.

- Educators should ensure that all food served to the table or individual plates should be discarded if not eaten and not served again later.
- Where food has been heated educators must ensure that the food is allowed to cool before it is given to the child to eat. Educators should test the temperature by removing a small piece of food with a spoon to another plate and testing the temperature of the food with their hand then throwing this piece of food away and washing the spoon.
- Educators must ensure that food already reheated is not heated again
- Educators should supervise closely to ensure that children do not share bowls or utensils or eat from each other's plates or cups.
- Educators must discard food which has dropped on the floor.
- Educators should also refer to the Healthy Eating and Meal Time Policy.

Cleaning

- All cleaning agents will be stored away from the food preparation and food storage areas in a locked cupboard.
- All food preparation areas, that is, all surfaces that come into contact with food (including handles on doors, refrigerators and cupboards), will be cleaned and sanitized regularly and systematically throughout the day. For example, walls and splash back areas will be wiped down before the serving benches and the benches will be cleaned before the floor is cleaned.
- All other areas, for example, stoves, microwave ovens, refrigerators, exhaust hoods and filters, the dishwasher etc. will be maintained and cleaned as required and at least monthly.
- Windowsills and doorframes etc will be wiped down weekly.
- Cleaning records must be maintained..
- Paper towels (or disposable cloths) may be used for cleaning. In cases where regular cloths are used they will be washed in hot water after every use.
- Where a dishwasher is not used the following procedure must be followed:
 - **Pre-clean** - remove excess dirt and food scraps by sweeping, wiping or scraping, and pre-rinsing with water.
 - **Wash** -remove surface grease and dirt, using hot water and a detergent.
 - **Rinse** - remove loose dirt and detergent.
 - **Sanitize** - that is, use a sanitizing solution or commercially available food grade sanitizer
 - **Final rinse** - to remove sanitizer (depending on the type of sanitizer used).
 - **Dry** - allow to air dry.
- Waste will be disposed of regularly and appropriately in sealed bags.
- Garbage bins will be cleaned and disinfected weekly or when visibly dirty.

Food preparation with children

- Educators must ensure that children always wash hands before handling any food.
- Children are to be closely supervised at all times when involved in cooking experiences.
- Educators should ensure that children are not exposed to unreasonable risks associated with heat, sharp objects or raw food.
- Educators should conduct a risk assessment prior to cooking with children
- Children who have experienced vomiting or diarrhoea should not participate in food preparation until they have not had any symptoms for 48 hours.
- Tie up any long hair and use clean aprons where possible.
- Foods being prepared by children should be carefully considered prior to programming, allergies must be considered, and families should be provided with recipes where suitable. The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend the following foods as suitable and non-suitable for children's cooking experiences;

- Foods suitable for cooking classes include cooked biscuits, fresh pasta, soups and pizza. These types of food will be cooked and exposed to high temperatures, killing any bacteria that may be in the food.
- Foods not suitable for cooking classes include fruit salad, biscuits or slices that do not need cooking, and jellies. These types of food are not cooked and therefore not exposed to high temperatures. Refrigeration does not kill germs.
- Risk will be minimised if food is consumed immediately after cooking.

Allergies, Intolerances and Preferences

- The Nominated Supervisor must ensure that all persons working at the service are aware of allergies present in children.
- Posters, including Action Plans, may be displayed in the kitchen. These posters may contain details including the child's name, known allergy and a photo of the child for easy identification. This is for the safety of children. Families will be advised of this practice in the Enrolment Form and Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan.
- Educators are to complete allergy and intolerance training during induction to become aware of children with allergies.
- Educators will be provided with updated allergy and intolerance information as soon as it is received to ensure all details are up to date.
- Educators in rooms are to verbally advise new staff as they enter the room to relieve educators of known allergies and intolerances.
- The kitchen is to have a current copy of the allergy/intolerances/preferences at all times.
- All educators must take all reasonable steps to ensure they are aware of children's allergies and intolerances and take these into consideration when planning children's activities.
- Educators, where possible, should ensure that known allergens are not present within the environment. Where this is neither practicable or possible, a risk assessment should be completed in conjunction with the child's family and shared with all persons working with the child at any time.

Monitoring and Compliance

- Nominated Supervisors must conduct regular checks of Food Safety Plans (if under a Food License) and practices in the preparation and serving of food.
- **Where service do not prepare food, the Nominated Supervisor must still monitor:**
 - **Fridge temperatures and cleanliness**
 - **Children's cooking risk assessments and procedures**
 - **Cleaning checklists**
 - **Health and hygiene for storage and serving of food**
 - **Hand washing and use of utensils**
- Approved providers and Nominated Supervisors must refer to local legislation around the Food Business Licence Requirement for their service's specific needs.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

- Educators and families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Those preparing and serving food will be provided with a copy of this policy.

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Food Safety Plan and associated documents, forms and checklists
- Local and state and territory legislation
- Handwashing Policy
- Healthy Eating and Meal Time Policy
- Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan
- Medical Action Plans and allergies listings
- Meal Check Form
- Menus and ingredient lists

SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Termination of child enrolment
- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY

- *“Education and Care Services National Regulations”*, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (Dec 2019)
- *“12 Golden Rules of Safe Food Handling”*, Nutrition Australia (accessed on-line April 2020)
http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/sites/default/files/Safe%20Food%20Handling_Printable%20PDF.pdf
- *“Get up and Grow – Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood – Director/Coordinator Book”*, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (2009) (accessed on-line April 2020)
[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF001DADB3/\\$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/EA1E1000D846F0AFCA257BF001DADB3/$File/HEPA%20-%20A4%20Book%20-%20Directors%20Book%20-%20LR.pdf)
- Nutrition Australia website and related factsheets (accessed on-line April 2020)
<http://www.nutritionaustralia.org>
- *“5th Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services”* Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council 2013.
- *“Guide to the National Quality Framework”* Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020

DATE CREATED: November 2011

REVIEW DETAILS:

Review Date	Details of Changes
January 2013	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
January 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under “serving food safety” – addition of “Where tongs are not used educators must either use gloves or have freshly washed hands.” • sources updated where applicable
March 2015	<p>Under Implementation the following has been inserted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While all care is taken to ensure foods prepared and served are free from known allergens we cannot accept responsibility for undeclared allergens in food purchased or food packaged or produced in a way that may expose it to traces of allergens. • All food purchased or created for use at the Centre, or distributed for consumption within the Centre, must be consumed on the premises.

June 2015	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
April 2016	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
May 2017	<p>Sources updated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allergies and intolerances must be recorded and displayed in a number of locations, including food preparation areas to ensure children’s individual needs are met. • Any person preparing or serving food must be provided with copies of Action Plans and Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plans. • Food may only be purchased from trusted suppliers and in accordance with the Food Safety Program. • Foods must be placed in sealed containers once their packages are open and expiry and opening dates recorded on the container. • Educators should use a thermometer to test and record fridge temperatures at least twice daily to ensure it is 5°C or below. (records must be kept). This includes fridges in children’s learning spaces as well as staff fridges and kitchen fridges. Freezers storing foods must also be tested and recorded as per the Food Safety Plan. • Children should have opportunities, age and developmentally appropriate, for serving themselves from shared platters. Tongs and other utensils suitable for children must be used. • Cleaning records must be maintained as per the Food Safety Plan. • Garbage bins will be cleaned and disinfected weekly or when visibly dirty. • The National Health and Medical Research Council recommend the following foods as suitable and non-suitable for children’s cooking experiences; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Foods suitable for cooking classes include cooked biscuits, fresh pasta, soups and pizza. These types of food will be cooked and exposed to high temperatures, killing any bacteria that may be in the food. ○ Foods not suitable for cooking classes include fruit salad, biscuits or slices that do not need cooking, and jellies. These types of food are not cooked and therefore not exposed to high temperatures. Refrigeration does not kill germs. • Information on children’s cooking classes in Rationale and Implementation. • Where service do not prepare food, the Nominated Supervisor must still monitor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fridge temperatures and cleanliness ○ Children’s cooking risk assessments and procedures ○ Cleaning checklists ○ Health and hygiene for storage and serving of food ○ Hand washing and use of utensils • The following forms have been added to the related form section: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medical Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan ○ Medical Action Plans and allergies listings
April 2018	<p>Included in Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where meals are provided by the service an approved or accredited Food Safety Plan is required and the service must hold a Food Business License. All staff should be given clear guidance on the correct procedures relating to food handling, transportation and storage. • Included comprehensive section on allergies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusion of new form – “Meal Check Form”• Updated sources
March2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated sources
April 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated sources• Removal of table containing food safety authorities contact details due to multiple changes.