

# YARRAM EARLY LEARNING FOOD SAFETY

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

## PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- Effective food safety practices at Yarram Early Learning Centre that comply with legislative requirements and meet best practice standards
- Minimising the risk to children of scalds and burns from hot drinks.
- Minimising the risk of cross-contamination between foods, children and staff
- This policy should be read in conjunction with *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy*.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### VALUES

Yarram Early Learning Incorporated is committed to:

- Ensuring the safety of all children and adults attending the service
- Taking all reasonable precautions to reduce potential hazards and harm to children attending the service
- Ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures are implemented at the service, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- Promoting safe practices in relation to the handling of hot drinks at the service
- Educating all service users in the prevention of scalds and burns that can result from handling hot drinks
- Complying with all relevant legislation and standards, including the *Food Act 1984* and the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

### Background

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 and intolerances (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy and Coeliac Policy*).

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 the Act, local councils in Victoria are required to classify every food premises in their municipality according to its food safety risk.

## LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 77*
- *Food Act 1984 (Vic)*, as amended 2012
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
- Standard 2.1 Health Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
- Element 2.1.3 Healthy lifestyle: Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

**Department of Health:** The State Government department responsible for the health and wellbeing of Victorians, and with oversight of the administration of the *Food Act 1984*.

**Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

**Food allergies:** Some foods and food ingredients, or their components, can cause severe allergic reactions including anaphylaxis (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*). Less common symptoms of food allergy include infantile colic, reflux of stomach contents, eczema, chronic diarrhea 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 [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)

**Food safety:** (In relation to this policy) ensuring food provided by the service is fit for human consumption.

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ):** A bi-national Government agency with the responsibility to develop and administer the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code), which details standards and requirements in areas such as food additives, food safety, labelling and genetically modified (GM) foods. Enforcement and interpretation of the Code is the responsibility of State/Territory departments and food agencies within Australia and New Zealand.

**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.

**High-risk foods:** Bacteria that has the potential to cause food-poisoning can grow and multiply on some foods more easily than others. High-risk foods include meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products, small goods, cooked rice/pasta and prepared salads (such as coleslaw, pasta salads, rice salads and fruit salads). Food that is contained in packages, cans or jars can become high-risk once opened, and should be handled and stored appropriately.

**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 vapors.

## Sources and related policies

### SOURCES

- Allergy Facts [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- DET Healthy Eating: [https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/Pages/healthy\\_eating.aspx#link64](https://education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/Pages/healthy_eating.aspx#link64)
- Food Standards Australian New Zealand <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>
- Food Smart Victoria: <https://www.foodsmart.vic.gov.au/>
- Communicable Disease Section, Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (2019), A guide to the management and control of gastroenteritis outbreaks in children's centres. Victorian Government, Melbourne: <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. Contact the Department of Health if your inquiry relates to general food compliance issues (and you don't know where to start) or you are looking for publications on food safety or information on legislation.
- Telephone: 1300 364 352 (free call within Australia)  
Email: [foodsafety@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:foodsafety@health.vic.gov.au)  
Website: <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety>
- Keeping food 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>
- dofoodsafely – 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: telephone (03) 9036 2306 or email:  
[info@kidsafevic.com.au](mailto:info@kidsafevic.com.au). For a fact sheet on scalds and burns, visit their website: [www.kidsafevic.com.au/images/stories/pdfs/Burns\\_Scalds.pdf](http://www.kidsafevic.com.au/images/stories/pdfs/Burns_Scalds.pdf)
- 

## RELATED POLICIES

- *Anaphylaxis Policy*
- *Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy*
- *Child Safe Environment Policy*
- *Coeliac Disease Policy*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy*
- *Diabetes Policy*
- *Hygiene Policy*
- *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*
- *Pest Control*

## PROCEDURES

### ***The Approved Provider is responsible for:***

- 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
- Ensuring that this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other service events

- Informing DET, DHHS, and parents/guardians if an outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning occurs at the service

### ***The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:***

- Ensuring that 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 (Regulation 77(1))
- 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 *Sources: Department of Health – FoodSmart food safety program, and Hygiene Policy*)
- Monitoring staff compliance with food safety practices (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – FoodSmart food safety program*)
- Ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained at the service (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – FoodSmart food safety program, and Hygiene Policy*)
- Providing parents/guardians with a copy of this policy, and with up-to-date information on the safe provision of food for their children
- 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 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service).
- Ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and intolerances (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy, Asthma Policy and Coeliac Policy*)
- Ensuring that all facilities and equipment for food preparation and storage are clean, and in good repair and working order
- Removing pests and vermin from the premises
- Ensuring that 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 (Regulation 77(2)) (refer to attachments)
- 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
- Ensuring this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other service events
- Ensuring students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the service are informed of this policy.
- Ensuring staff are only consuming food when not in one of the four room where children are educated and care for. Staff are provided with

- appropriate break/meal times where food can be consumed in a safe environment. (refer to Dealing with infectious diseases policy)
- Documenting and implementing a food safety program (refer to *Definitions*), if required
  - Ensuring that staff undergo training in safe food handling, as required
  - 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
  - **The Supervisors and relevant Room Leader are responsible for ensuring volunteers and students are following this policy and the outlined procedures.**

### **Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- Keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety
- Being aware of safe food practices and good hygiene practices (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – FoodSmart food safety program, and Hygiene Policy*, and undergoing training if required (refer to attachments)
- Informing students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the service about this policy
- Ensuring that children's lunchboxes are kept indoors, away from heat sources (including direct sunlight)
- 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
- Teaching children to wash and dry their hands
  - Before touching or eating food
  - After touching chicken or raw meat
  - After using the toilet
  - After blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
  - After playing with an animal/pet
- Seeking input from parents/guardians on cultural values or religious expectations regarding food handling, provision and consumption
- Informing the Nominated Supervisor or Yarram Early Learning Centre of any outbreaks of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning at the service
- Removing hazardous food (refer to *Definitions*), including food that has fallen on the floor, and providing alternative food items
- Maintaining good personal and kitchen hygiene (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – FoodSmart food safety program*)
- Covering all wounds/cuts on hands or arms with wound strips or bandages
- Complying with the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks)

- at the service)
- Informing parents/guardians and visitors to the service about the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service).
- Complying with the responsible consumption of food within the service and only consuming food when not in a room where children are educated and cared for. (refer to Dealing with infectious diseases policy)

### **Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- Washing hands prior to participating in food preparation and cooking activities
- Ensuring that food preparation surfaces, utensils, lunchboxes and reusable drink bottles are clean
- Washing all fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- 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
- Complying with the requirements of this policy
- Providing details of specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor prior to the child commencing at the service and whenever these requirements change.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service

Attachment 2: Storing Food

Attachment 3: Reheating Food

## **AUTHORISATION**

This policy was adopted by Yarram Early Learning Incorporated in October 2017.

Reviewed by Committee - September 2023

To be reviewed - September 2025



## ATTACHMENT 1

### Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service

Scalds and burns from hot liquids are a common cause of hospital admission in 0 to 4 year olds. A child's skin is thinner and more sensitive than an adult's and will therefore experience a more severe burn. Children's natural curiosity, impulsiveness, mode of reaction and lack of experience in assessing danger are contributing factors to the vulnerability of children at this age.

Common scenarios that can lead to a child being scalded include when a child pulls a cup of tea, coffee or hot water from a table or bench, or when a child runs into a person holding a hot drink resulting in the hot drink spilling over the child's body.

The consumption of lukewarm drinks or the use of lidded cups/mugs in areas accessed by children should be considered with caution, as this is not necessarily a safe practice and might give the impression that it is acceptable to consume hot drinks around children.

#### GENERAL GUIDELINES

##### **The Nominated Supervisor and all staff are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that hot drinks are only prepared and consumed in areas inaccessible to children, such as the kitchen, staffroom and office. Only a lidded drink bottle with water is permitted within the rooms
- Hot drinks must not be carried around the room, or outside but must be situated in an area that children cannot access and adults must move to that area to consume them.
- Informing parents/guardians on duty, visitors to the service, students, volunteers and any other person participating in the program of the service's hot drink procedures and the reasons for such procedures
- Ensuring that children enrolled and participating in the program do not have access to areas of the building that are likely to be hazardous, including the kitchen, staffroom and office
- Ensuring that parents/guardians attending the service actively supervise children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, including siblings
- Ensuring that at least one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times that children are being educated and cared for by the service
- Implementing safety procedures in relation to hot drinks at service events occurring outside operational hours, including:
  - Safely locating urns, kettles and power cords out of reach of children
  - Ensuring a person with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance for social events held outside operational hours.





## Cold food

<p><b>What can I do?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store cold food at or below 5 °C.</li> <li>• Make sure the freezer and refrigerator or cool room can keep food at the right temperature. Check that thermometers are reading accurately.</li> <li>• Keep high-risk foods (such as meat and seafood), and any raw egg products (such as chocolate mousse or mayonnaise), or raw eggs used to make such products under refrigeration when not in use.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How can I check?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure core temperatures of high-risk food stored in the refrigerator using a probe thermometer regularly (at least one check per day). Record results in <b>Record 2: My temperature checks of food in cold or hot storage</b>.</li> <li>• Check your completed food temperature records (Record 2) to ensure that safe food temperatures are maintained.</li> <li>• If using remote temperature monitoring IT systems, refer to the Department of Health and Human Services <i>Guide to remote monitoring of temperatures in food storage units</i> for advice on how to check and monitor the operation of your system. Access the guide at <a href="https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-how-to-keep-it-safe/remote-temperature-monitoring-food">https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-how-to-keep-it-safe/remote-temperature-monitoring-food</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>What if it is not right?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If refrigeration units are not keeping food at or below 5 °C, adjust the settings or contact a refrigerator specialist.</li> <li>• Throw out high-risk foods if you suspect they have not been stored at the correct temperature.</li> </ul>

## Frozen food

<p><b>What can I do?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store frozen food at or below -15 °C.</li> <li>• Make sure the freezer can keep food at the right temperature. Check that thermometers are reading accurately.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How can I check?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure core temperatures of high-risk food stored in the freezer using a probe thermometer regularly (at least one check per day). Record results in <b>Record 2: My temperature checks of food in cold or hot storage</b>.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check your completed food temperature records (Record 2) to ensure that safe food temperatures are maintained.</li> <li>• If frozen food is warmer than -15 °C, test whether it is frozen hard. If it is frozen hard it can still be used.</li> <li>• If using remote temperature monitoring IT systems, refer to the Department of Health and Human Services <i>Guide to remote monitoring of temperatures in food storage units</i> for advice on how to check and monitor the operation of your system. Access the guide at <a href="https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-how-to-keep-it-safe/remote-temperature-monitoring-food">https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/food-how-to-keep-it-safe/remote-temperature-monitoring-food</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>What if it is not right?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If frozen food shows signs of thawing, either continue thawing and use it immediately, or discard the food.</li> <li>• Throw out high-risk foods if you suspect they have not been stored at the correct temperature.</li> </ul>

## Reheating food

<b>What can I do?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reheat food thoroughly to kill food poisoning bacteria.</li><li>• Always reheat food until it is hot (75 °C or hotter) all the way through.</li><li>• Use cooking time and cooking equipment temperatures to achieve this.</li><li>• Do not use bain-maries to reheat food.</li><li>• Reheat according to the manufacturer's instructions.</li><li>• Only reheat food once and discard any left overs.</li></ul>
<b>How can I check?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a probe thermometer to regularly measure the temperature of the thickest part of the food.</li><li>• Check that:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ reheated food is hot (steaming) all the way through</li><li>○ liquids bubble rapidly when stirred.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>What if it is not right?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the reheating time or temperature.</li><li>• Reduce the portion size of food being reheated.</li><li>• Review your reheating method.</li><li>• Adjust recipe cards or equipment settings if necessary.</li><li>• Repair or replace equipment.</li></ul>