

NUTRITION & FOOD SAFETY POLICY



Adopted: 3rd December 2020 – Res No: 244.12.20

Our Vacation Care Service recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines for primary school aged children.

Our Vacation Care Service recognises the important role educators have in teaching healthy lifestyles through everyday experiences and routines and physical activity. Our educators support families by providing information about healthy food and drink for their children when visiting our service.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child’s health and physical activity is supported and promoted
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented
2.1.3	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

Related Policies

Multicultural Policy	Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Out of School Hours Care Services are required by legislation within the National Quality Standard to ensure the provision of healthy foods and drinks that meet the requirements for children according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. It is essential that our Vacation Care Service partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for children to positively influence their health and wellbeing. Dietary and healthy eating habits formed in the early years are shown to continue into adulthood and can reduce the risk factors associated with chronic adult conditions such as obesity, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Our Vacation Care Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of children and is committed to promoting and supporting healthy food and drink choices for children in our care. This policy affirms our position on the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in our care and the promotion and education of healthy choices for optimum nutrition.

We believe in providing a positive eating environment that reflects dietary requirements, cultural and family values, and promotes lifelong learning for children, as we commit to implementing and embedding the healthy eating key messages outlined the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, visitors, and management of the Vacation Care Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Vacation Care Service has a responsibility to help children to develop good food practices and approaches, by working with families and educators.

Mealtimes reflect a relaxed and pleasant environment where educators engage in meaningful conversations with children. This assists in creating a positive and enjoyable eating environment.

NUTRITION

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

Our Vacation Care Service will:

As food is brought from home:

- 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
- 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.

Management/Nominated Supervisor/Educators will:

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink
- be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans
- ensure children remain seated while eating and drinking
- supervise children whilst eating and drinking
- encourage and provide opportunities for staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood
- display nutritional information for families
- not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe
- establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program
- encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes

FOOD HYGIENE

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 Vacation Care Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning when engaging in programmed cooking experiences.

Buying food for planned experiences:

Our Vacation Care Service will:

- 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

Cooking with children

Cooking can help develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits. Cooking is a great, fun activity and provides opportunities for children to be exposed to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills. During any cooking experience, educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

Preparing and serving food

Our Vacation Service will:

- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60 °C until ready to serve.
- 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.
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods
- 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
- 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.

Cleaning

Our Vacation Care Service will:

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- ensure that all cooking and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitised before use
- ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry
- ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight
- ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly and door seals checked and replaced if not in good repair
- prevent pest infestations by cleaning spills as quickly as possible and ensuring rubbish and food scraps are disposed of frequently
- ensure that floor mops are thoroughly cleaned and air dried after each use
- replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling

All staff handling food will:

- 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 or 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
- 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.

Creating a positive learning environment

Our Vacation Care Service will:

- ensure that educators sit with the children at meal and snack times to role-model healthy food and drink choices and actively engage children in conversations about the food and drink provided
- encourage children to choose water as a preferred drink
- endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- encourage children to try different foods but do not force them to eat
- not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children

Vacation Care Service Program

Our Vacation Care Service will:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating

- encourage children to participate in a variety of ‘hands-on’ food preparation experiences
- provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices
- embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences

Communicating with families

Our Vacation Care 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 Vacation Care Service and work in partnership with families to develop an appropriate response so that children’s individual dietary needs are met
- 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 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.

Source

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. *My Time Our Place-Framework for School Aged Children*. (2011).

Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health The Australian Dietary Guidelines* <https://www.eat-forhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Food Act 2003

Food Regulation 2015

Foodsafety.gov. (2019): <https://www.foodsafety.gov>

Food Safety Standards (Australia only). (2015): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/Pages/default.aspx>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/Pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>

Food Standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).

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

National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

Review

POLICY REVIEWED	September 2020	NEXT REVIEW DATE	September 2021
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