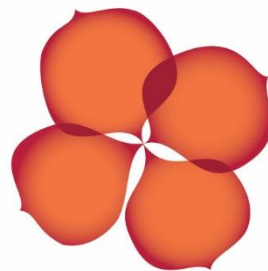


POLICY

**Nutrition and Food
Safety**



**NT
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOLS**

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Document Title: Nutrition and Food Safety Policy
Policy Category: EL - Early Learning
Policy Monitor: ELC Nominated Supervisor
Contact: policy@ntchristianschools.com.au
Approved by: ELC Nominated Supervisor
Approval date: 22 November 2024
Review date: May 2025
Access Level: Public

Policy
Feedback



AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Changes Made
1.0		Version history unrecorded
1.1	05/2020	Minor additions – discretionary foods, online shopping addition of health professionals' information to ensure best practice. Sources checked for currency.
2.0	10/2021	Policy review and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy Guidelines (Aug 2021). Additional sections added for AP, Management, NS and Educator and Food Handlers.
2.1	05/2022	Policy maintenance, no major changes, hyperlinks checked and repaired as required.
3.0	07/2023	Updates to food Safety standards (effective 12/2023), Policy maintenance, hyperlinks checked and repaired. Continuous improvement / reflection section added. Childcare Desktop Related Resources section added, link to Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations added in 'Sources'.
4.0	11/2024	Policy maintenance, updated Food Safety requirements for children's services – check state/territory requirements, minor edits, sources checked for currency and updated as required, new policy template and Board approved preamble.

1 Preamble

NT Christian Schools is an organisation that exists to advance the Christian religion through the provision of high-quality education and training services and religious instruction. A holistic and relational approach to learning for each individual student, underpinned by a biblical world view provides an education for the whole person, for the whole of life.

We believe that the Christian faith is a life-transforming faith that will be authentically evidenced in a believer's actions. The bible exhorts us to pursue godliness and to model biblical standards of behaviour. Everything we do, our practices, our conduct, our use and stewardship of resources is an act of worship to God and a witness to those around us.

All members of the NT Christian Schools community are to be committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment for students, staff and the whole community in a manner that is consistent with the Christian ethos and beliefs of NT Christian Schools.

Employees and those a policy applies to are fully supported by NT Christian Schools in ensuring compliance with these documents.

2 Purpose

As per *Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations*, our Service has a *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* and procedures in place to ensure quality practices relating to nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements are always followed.

Our Service recognises the importance of safe food handling and healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. We acknowledge that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children.

We are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. We support and promote the NT Government's healthy eating resources for parents and schools, and utilise the Australian Government's *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

3 Policy applies to

This applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, students, volunteers and management of the Service.

The policy is available to all parents, carers, children, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors via the NT Christian Schools website and on request from any office of NT Christian Schools.

The policy is available to all staff and Directors of the Board via the NT Christian Schools *Canvas Policy and Advisory Library*.

4 Policy

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are required by legislation 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 Service partners with families to provide education about nutrition and promote healthy eating habits for young 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 Service recognises the importance of healthy eating for the growth, development, and wellbeing of young 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 to support the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings* outlined in the *Get Up & Grow* resources.

Our Service is also committed to ensuring consistently high standards of food preparation and food storage and transportation are adhered to.

4.1 Implementation

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

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with 50% of the recommended dietary intake for all nutrients. Food will be served at various times throughout the day to cater for all children's nutritional needs. 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. 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). All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

Recent changes to the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2003 (Standard 3.2.2A) involve the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor who must be available to supervise food handlers at the Service. It is a requirement that both the Food Safety Supervisor and all food handlers attend food safety training. Additionally, records must be maintained relating to receiving, storage, processing, displaying and transportation of food. These records must be retained for a period of 3 months. Currently, our services do not provide food.

4.2 Food Brought From Home

Our service will:

- provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes, along with examples on healthy lunchboxes;
- 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 in their lunchbox, 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 Service include confectionary (lollies, sweets, chocolate, jelly), deep fried foods (chicken nuggets, fish fingers) and sugary drinks (cordial, energy drinks).

4.3 Food Hygiene

Food poisoning is caused by bacteria, viruses, or other toxins being present in food and can cause extremely unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps, and fevers. Children under five years of age are considered a high-risk group as their immune systems are still developing and they produce less of the stomach acid required to kill harmful bacteria than older children or adults (Foodsafety.gov. 2019).

Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

4.4 Storing Food

Our 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)
- 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;
- not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers);
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separate to food items.

4.5 Preparing and Serving Food

Our Service will:

- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5oC until ready to serve;
- 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;
- ensure that gloves are changed between handling different foods or changing tasks;
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans;
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food;
- ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away.

4.6 Cleaning

Our Service will:

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation;
- ensure that all dishwashing sponges, brushes, and scourers are cleaned after each use and allowed to air dry or placed in the dishwasher;
- 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.

4.7 Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Our 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;
- choose water as a preferred drink;
- endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children;
- encourage children to assist to clean their chair and table, and serve their own food and drink, providing opportunities for them to develop independence and self-esteem while promoting children's agency and decision-making;
- respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats;
- be patient with messy or slow eaters;
- 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.

4.8 Service Program

Our 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.

4.9 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. On these occasions participating educators will be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to.

4.10 Communicating with Families

Our 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 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 and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. 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.

5 Roles and responsibilities

5.1 All Staff

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 (and food tongs) are used by all staff handling 'ready to eat' foods.
- ensure food is stored and served at safe temperatures (below 5oC or above 60oC), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children

- discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.

5.2 Approved Provider / Management / Nominated Supervisor

The approved provider / management / nominated supervisor will:

- ensure educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations in relation to this policy and relevant procedures to ensure awareness of safe food handling practices while promoting healthy eating
- ensure new staff and educators are aware of food practices and procedures as outlined in this policy during induction and orientation
- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment
- ensure food and beverages are offered to children regularly during the day
- ensure enrolment forms include information relating to child's food preferences, allergies, intolerances, cultural or religious considerations or medical conditions which involve food or food practices
- consult with families on enrolment to develop individual management plans, including completing Medical Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food allergies, food intolerances and special dietary requirements as per Medical Conditions Policy
- ensure children's individual dietary requirements as per enrolment information or medical condition plans are communicated to all staff
- ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff
- encourage and provide opportunities for staff and educators to undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices

5.3 Educators / Food Handlers

Educators and Food Handlers will:

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment;
- be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special dietary requirements and consult with families and management to ensure individual *Medical Management Plans* are developed and implemented, including completing Medical Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per *Medical Conditions Policy*;
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking;

- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking;
- ensure all children are always supervised children whilst eating and drinking;
- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices;
- consider the needs of various age groups at the service- meal times may be offered progressively or at different times;
- ensure age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture are provided for each child;
- not allow food to be used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe;
- not allow the children to be force fed or being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat;
- establish healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional information into our program;
- talk to families about their child's food intake and voice any concerns about their child's eating ;
- encourage parents to the best of our ability to continue our healthy eating message in their homes;
- ensure pets or animals are not present within the kitchen or food preparation areas.

6 The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

6.1 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

6.2 Education and Care Services National Regulations

Regulation	Definition
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 and family day care educator
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

7 Resources For Families

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

8 Continuous Improvement Reflection

Policies will be reviewed regularly and updated when need identified in consultation with families, staff and management.

9 Related Resources – NTCS PAL / Childcare Desktop

- Food Hygiene Practices Procedure
- Kitchen Cleaning Checklist
- Kitchen Cleaning Procedure
- Nutritional Practices Survey
- Refrigeration Temperature Control Register

10 Related legislation and policy

10.1 NT Christian School policies and procedures

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Child Safe Environment Policy
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

- ELC Enrolment Policy
- Excursions / Incursions Policy
- Governance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Medical Conditions Policy

10.2 Legislation

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#).
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). *Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines*.
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).
- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (Amended 2023).
- *Food Act 2003*
- *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*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

10.3 Other relevant resources

- Australian Government Department of Education. (2022). [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#). V2.0.
- Australian Government Department of Health *Eat for Health- The Australian Dietary Guidelines* <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2023). *Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (4th 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

- National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>
- 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](#)
- Victoria State Government Education and Training Nutrition Australia [Healthy eating in the National Quality Standard A guide for early childhood education and care services](#)

10.4 Acknowledgement

Policy adapted from Childcare Centre Desktop © 2024