

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- effective food safety practices at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc 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 *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc is committed to:

- ensuring the safety of all children and adults attending the centre
- taking all reasonable precautions to reduce potential hazards and harm to children attending the centre.
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures are implemented at the centre, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food.
- promoting safe practices in relation to the handling of hot drinks at the centre
- educating all centre 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*.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved in handling, preparing, storing and serving food for consumption at Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc, and to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisors, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the centre.

3. PROCEDURES

The Approved Provider is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers have access to this policy and have a clear understanding of the procedures and practices outlined within
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor, staff and volunteers at the centre 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 centre (Regulation 77(1))
- contacting the local council in the centre's area of operation to determine the centre's food safety risk classification and requirements under the *Food Act 1984*

- complying with all requirements of the centre'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 safety supervisor if required (refer to *Background* and *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety*)
- allowing parents/guardians access to a copy of this policy, and with up-to-date information on the safe provision of food for their children (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Food safety at home and in the community*)
- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff have access to 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 staff undergo training in safe food handling, as required.
- monitoring staff compliance with food safety practices (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe*)
- encouraging volunteers to complete training in safe food handling techniques (refer to *Sources: defensively*)
- ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained at the centre (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and Hygiene Policy*)
- displaying hygiene guidelines/posters and food safety guidelines/posters in the food areas of the centre for the reference of staff and families involved in the preparation and distribution of food to children (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and Hygiene Policy*)
- ensuring that this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and another centre events.
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy* and *Asthma Policy*)
- 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.
- ensuring that all facilities and equipment for food preparation and storage are clean, and in good repair and working order.
- 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.
- contacting local council to determine requirements prior to selling food at a fête, food stall or other centre event. Such requirements may include completing a Food Act notification form and/or a statement of trade form.
- removing pests and vermin from the premises
- informing DET, DHS and parents/guardians if an outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning occurs at the centre.
- informing families of the availability of cold storage facilities at the centre to ensure parents/guardians make suitable food choices when supplying food for their own child, or for children to share.
- ensuring staff, parents/guardians and others attending the centre 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 centre).

All Early Childhood Staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that staff and volunteers at the centre 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 centre (Regulation 77(2))
- 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 centre and whenever these requirements change.
- keeping up to date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety
- ensuring staff undergo training in safe food handling and good hygiene practices, as required.
- encouraging volunteers to complete training in safe food handling techniques (refer to *Sources: dofoodsafely*)
- ensuring this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and another centre events.
- ensuring students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the centre are informed of this policy.
- ensuring that children's lunchboxes are kept indoors, away from heat sources (including direct sunlight) and refrigerated if necessary.
- discussing food safety with children to increase awareness and assist in developing safe practices.
- discouraging children from sharing drink bottles or cups at the centre
- 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 *Supervision of Children Policy*)
- teaching children to wash and dry their hands (refer to *Hygiene Policy*):
 - 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 Approved Provider of any outbreaks of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning at the centre
- 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
- maintaining good personal and kitchen hygiene (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and Hygiene Policy*)
- covering all wounds/cuts on hands or arms with wound strips or bandages
- ensuring hands are clean when handling food, using gloves if appropriate.
- complying with the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the centre (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the centre)

- informing parents/guardians and visitors to the centre about the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the centre (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the centre).

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 centre and whenever these requirements change.

Volunteers and students, while at the centre, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

EVALUATION

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 GRPSA policy review cycle, or as required.
- notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy or its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the centre
- Attachment 2: Bottle safety and preparation procedures

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the Approved Provider of Goulburn Region Preschool Association Inc in November 2012.

Review and Approved: 24th September 2016.

Reviewed and Approved: 25th November 2019.

Reviewed and Approved: 28th April 2020.

REVIEW DATE: APRIL 2023

ATTACHMENT 1

Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the centre

Scalds and burns from hot liquids are a common cause of hospital admission in 0- to 4-year-old. A child's skin is thinner and more sensitive than an adult's and will therefore experience a more severe burn (refer to *Sources*: Kid safe fact sheet). 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 Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and all staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that hot drinks are prepared and consumed in a safe manner. Minimizing the risk to children.
- informing parents/guardians on duty, visitors to the centre, students, volunteers and any other person participating in the program of the centre's hot drink procedures and the reasons for such procedures
- ensuring that children enrolled and participating in the program are supervised at all times.
- ensuring that parents/guardians attending the centre actively supervise children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, including siblings.
- ensuring that 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 centre as required by the regulations that the centre is operating under at the time.
- educating centre users about the prevention of burns and scalds by providing relevant information (refer to *Sources*: Burns and scalds – children and Kid safe fact sheet), including appropriate first aid for scalds.
- implementing safety procedures in relation to hot drinks at centre events:
 - ensuring a person with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance for social events held outside operational hours.

ATTACHMENT 2

Bottle safety and preparation procedures

Bottles of breast milk and formula need to be carefully prepared, stored and heated.

Storing bottles

- All bottles to be stored in the fridge until heating is to commence.
- Formula Bottles are to be pre-made at home, clearly labelled and placed in fridge as soon as possible on arrival to centre.
- Frozen breast milk is to be de-frosted in the fridge until heating.

Preparing bottles

- Wash hands first
- Ensure work surfaces are clean.

Heating bottles

Health authorities warn that a microwave should never be used to heat up a child's bottle as they heat unevenly and cause 'hotspots' that could seriously burn the child's mouth.

Breast milk loses its antibodies if heated in the microwave.

Never refreeze thawed breast milk.

Procedure for heating bottles

- Do not warm bottles in the microwave.
- Heat bottles once only. Do not allow a bottle to cool and then reheat it—this can allow germs to grow. Discard any warmed milk that has not been used after 30 minutes.
- Heat bottles in bottle warmers provided or stand the bottle in a container of hot water for no more than 15 minutes.
- Shake the bottle to ensure even heat distribution.
- Before feeding the infant, check the temperature of the milk by letting a little drop onto the inside of your wrist—it should feel comfortably warm or even a little bit cool.