

Early Learning

Food Safety Policy

Overarching Statement

The *Keeping Children Safe Policy* of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (refer to *sources*) is the overarching whole of church policy to be implemented by individuals and entities involved with or connected to the Uniting Church. All children who are involved in any of the Church's activities, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. The Church is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

Policy Statement

Uniting Early Learning 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;
- complying with all relevant legislation and standards, including the Food Act 1984 and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Executive Summary

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

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Date Published	02/07/2018	Revision Due Date	30/07/2020	

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(including gastrointestinal illness) can be caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses, chemicals or foreign objects that are present in food.

Effective food safety 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 (refer to *Anaphylaxis appendix* and *Asthma appendix*).

Service provision will pay a high level of attention to: personal hygiene, product choice, storage and preparation of food items, cooking meals (where required), cooling and reheating of food, cleaning and sanitising of equipment, and maintenance of hygienic premises to enable food safety and the minimisation of risk.

All educators are required to have current information and understanding of safe food practices, and training will be provided to ensure consistent procedural implementation relevant to the setting. A documented food safety program is to be maintained (where required), to identify and control food safety hazards.

Educators play a key role in modelling and reinforcing food safety routines. Intentional teaching practice and program development will promote the understanding of key concepts and procedures to both children and families.

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Current Environmental Context

This policy must be read in conjunction with the *Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play* policy

Safe and hygienic storage, handling, preparation and serving of all food and drinks consumed by children, including foods bought from home at all times is essential. This includes infant milk/formula and food provided when attending excursions and regular outings.

Food provided by a children's service must:

- be fit for human consumption
- not be adulterated or contaminated
- not have deteriorated or perished.

Food handlers are required to have skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene that is appropriate to the activities they perform.

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 and government departments are required to classify every food premises in their municipality according to its food safety risk. Uniting Early Learning should confirm their food safety risk classification and related requirements with the local council in the area in which they operate. (refer to *Attachment 15b*)

Hygiene and food safety guidelines/posters should be displayed in the food areas of the service so that staff and families involved in the preparation and distribution of food to children are well informed about proper procedures. Educators will assist children to take responsibility for consuming food and drinks in a hygienic manner and implement safe food handling, transportation and storage at all times.

Any outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning that occurs at the service must be notified to Uniting, the appropriate authority, and parents.

Attachment 15a: Responsibilities relating to the Food Safety policy

Attachment 15b: Food safety risk classification

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Attachment 15c: Procedures for the safe storage and heating of food and drink

Attachment 15d: Responsible consumption of hot liquids at the service

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Reference/Sources

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Keeping Children Safe Policy of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (approved May 2017).

Administration of First Aid Policy	Anaphylaxis appendix Policy
Asthma appendix Policy	Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
Diabetes appendix Policy	Excursions Regular Outings and Service Events Policy
Hygiene and Infectious Disease Policy	Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
Interactions with Children Policy	Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy
Workplace Health and Safety Policy- Level 2	Staffing Policy
Supervision of Children Policy	

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code:*
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/Pages/default.aspx>
- *Bottle Feeding – nutrition and safety* Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au (last updated May 2016, viewed March 2018)
- *Children's Services Act 1996:* Section 26, 29
- *Children's Services Regulations 2009:* Regulation: 80
- *Do Food Safely* (free online food safety program) 26 February 2018:
<http://dofoodsafely.health.vic.gov.au/>
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010:* Section 167
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011:* Regulation 77
- *Food Act 1984* (Vic)
- *Food Act 2003* (Tasmania)
- *Food Safety Programs for Food Service to Vulnerable Persons A guide to Standard 3.3.1*
<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/code/userguide/pages/aguidetostandards3314569.aspx>
- *Food Safety Regulation in Victoria.* Australian Institute of Food Safety
www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety
email: foodsafety@health.vic.gov.au

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- *National Quality Standard*, Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety
- *Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (5th edition) 3.5 Food Safety pg. 56. National Health and Medical Research Council (updated June 2013)
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch55>
- *Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care Class 4* (October 2014). Standard 13.
- *Department of Health and Human services-Public Environmental Health. 1800 671 738*
www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/peh/food_safety

Authorisation

This policy was adopted by Uniting Early Learning on: 02/07/2018

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by 30/07/2020

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