

Policy Document

Food Safety Program			
Policy Hierarchy link		Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 Food Act NSW 2003 Food Standards Code (FSANZ) Australia New Zealand 1991	
Version	Authorised by	Effective Date	Revision Date
3	SCECS Management	September 2025	September 2028

1. RATIONALE

The regulatory requirements of Standard 3.2.2 Food Safety Practices and Standard 3.2.3 Food Premises and Equipment of the Food Standards Code (FSC) are mandatory for any children's service that provides food.

SCECS services has voluntarily elected to implement Standard 3.2.1 Food Safety Programs of the FSC, as best practice guidelines, to effectively control food hazards. This helps to maintain effective food handling procedures ensuring food safety. This food safety program identifies,

- a) the potential hazards in all food handling operations of the service,
- b) where each identified hazard can be controlled, and the means of control,
- c) the monitoring of those controls,
- d) appropriate corrective action when the hazard is found, and
- f) appropriate records to be made and kept by the service to comply with the food safety program.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) requires an organised approach to food safety controls that will prevent, eliminate or reduce hazards to vulnerable groups such as young children and children with allergies.

HACCP forms part of the Food Safety Program as part of a quality assurance system to identify potential hazards that may occur and the process to monitor and rectify.

The Food Safety Program ensures compliance to the FSC and recommendations for safe food handling to provide a safe environment that promotes the health and well-being of children who attend SCECS services.

Early Education and Care services who provide food are classified as a food business and will receive routine inspections by local council health officers who monitor compliance with the FSC.

Each service must have a Food Safety Supervisor whose role is to minimise risk to children becoming ill from food poisoning because of incorrect handling and preparation of food.

3. PROCEDURES

3.0 RECEIVING AND STORING FOOD SAFELY

3.1 Purchase and transportation:

All foods should be received through a supplier who has been approved by the service that implements effective food safety control measures by complying with the national Food Safety Standards.

By maintaining a list of approved suppliers, this can assist with monitoring the performance of suppliers, supply in accordance with agreed specifications, as well as assist with traceability and any correction action required.

The transportation and delivery of food by the supplier should keep food under temperature controls and undertaken in a clean and hygienic manner where food does not become contaminated.

3.2 Receiving food:

All foods should be received from the supplier in a safe manner in line with food safety requirements. It is important to,

- check goods against invoices,
- ensure deliveries are made when the cook or staff are onsite to sign and check the safety of food,
- check foods for show signs of damage, deterioration, contamination or being tampered with, reject or discard the food,
- check 'use by' or 'best before' dates,
- check for product recalls,
- check the temperature of cold food upon delivery by placing a clean and sanitised probe thermometer in between cold packaging for one minute before reading the temperature,
- ensure the temperature of cold food is below 5 C,

- ensure the temperature of hot food is above 60 C,
- ensure frozen foods are still hard frozen,
- check if the temperature of food received is outside of the above temperature controls, reject or discard the food, and
- store immediately in the appropriate storage area.

3.3 Storing food: Good practices and procedures is required when storing foods to ensure it is maintained at optimal conditions prior to preparation.

3.3.1 Storing Dry Goods: Ensure,

- all stock is rotated to ensure the oldest stock is used first, first in first out,
- the 'use by' or 'best before' dates are checked and the produce is discarded if it has exceeded the date,
- sealed containers are used with lids that are placed off the ground,
- foods are labelled if removed from original packaging with the 'contents', 'date opened' and 'use by' or 'best before' by date,
- food is stored separately from chemicals, and
- storage is kept clean, and dry.

3.3.2 Storing Cold Goods: Ensure,

- the temperature is checked regularly,
- first in first out,
- all cold and frozen foods are covered,
- fruit and vegetables are refrigerated to maintain optimum freshness and food safety,
- cold food is stored 5 C or below,
- frozen food is stored - 10 C or below,
- raw and cooked foods are separated,
- foods are cooled quickly,
- all opened goods are refrigerated according to manufacturer's recommendations,

- foods removed from original packaging are labelled with signs that indicate the 'contents', 'date opened' and 'use by' or 'best before' date,
- raw food, such as meat, is stored below cooked and ready to eat foods on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator, preventing dripping and contamination, and
- dairy is not stored on fridge door due to frequent opening which changes the temperature of the food.

4.0 FOOD PREPARATION

4.1 Thawing food: Frozen foods should be thawed safely,

- within the refrigerator, on a tray that is covered on the bottom shelf,
- in a microwave, using the 'defrost' or 'low' setting, ensuring food is occasionally turned to thaw evenly,
- not at room temperature,
- and thoroughly before cooking,
- and used quickly after thawing, and
- never refrozen.

4.2 Preparing food: Food needs to be prepared using effective food handling strategies to ensure food safety. Always,

- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under running water before use,
- avoid using any fresh produce that is dirty, damaged, mouldy, slimy or bruised,
- avoid using eggs that are dirty or present with cracked shells,
- avoid direct contact with ready to eat foods using utensils instead,
- change disposable gloves and wash hands before commencing a new step in the food preparation process,
- have separate preparation areas / utensils, such as colour coded boards, for raw foods, and cooked or ready to eat foods, preventing the spread of harmful bacteria, and
- keep foods out of refrigerator for short periods only, 30 minutes at a time, such as cut fruit and vegetables, cheese, milk and sandwiches.

4.3 Cooking food: Cooking foods thoroughly and right through the centre helps

destroy harmful bacteria. It is important to check that all meat, chicken, fish and egg dishes are cooked thoroughly by using a probe thermometer to check. Ensure,

- foods are well cooked to 75 C,
- cooked food is then maintained at a temperature of 60 C,
- the temperature is checked to ensure the elimination of pathogens,
- the probe thermometer is cleaned and sanitised prior to use,
- liquids are continually stirred and checked for 'hot spots' before being served, and
- cooking always maintains the nutritional value of the food, where ever possible.

4.4 Cooling food - 4-hour / 2-hour rule: It is important to make sure cooked food has been cooled as quickly as possible in the fridge or freezer to prevent the growth of bacteria. When food is held for too long at temperatures between 5 C and 60 C, during the cooling process, harmful bacteria can grow. Cooling times can be reduced by,

- cooling smaller portions of food,
- cooling food in shallow containers, and
- cooling cooked food safely within 2 hours - from 60 C to 21 C and within a further four hours - from 21 C to 5 C.

4.5 Reheating food: Good hygienic practice is required during the reheating process, to ensure,

- food heats evenly by regularly stirring,
- food is only reheated once,
- leftover, cooked foods is used within 48 hours,
- reheated foods are never returned to the refrigerator or freezer, and
- foods are reheated to 60 C and maintained at this temperature until served.

4.6 Serving food - 4-hour / 2-hour rule: Food left for long periods of time in the temperature danger zone, between 5 C and 60 C, can allow foodborne pathogens to grow quickly potentially causing food poisoning. It is important to minimise the time that food spends in the 'temperature danger zone' to keep food safe.

By adhering to the 4-hour / 2-hour rule, food can be safely held out of the temperature control for short periods of time.

0-2 hours: Food that has been in the temperature danger zone for less than 2 hours can be

returned to the refrigerator to below 5 C, or heated to above 60 C and brought out again at a later time.

2 – 4 hours: Food that has been in the temperature danger zone between 2 to 4 hours must be used immediately.

More than 4 hours: Food that has been in the temperature danger zone more than 4 hours must be thrown away.

When food is being served,

- protect food from contamination by using containers with lids,
- supply separate serving utensils for each serving dish,
- keep foods separate, such as raw foods separated from cooked foods, and
- check and monitor the temperature with a clean and sanitised thermometer probe,
- ensure food to be served hot should be kept at 60 C or above,
- ensure food to be served cold should be kept at 5 C or below, and
- ensure food is served quickly to minimise time in the temperature danger zone.

5.0 MAINTENANCE OF PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT

5.1 Maintenance: The food premises and equipment should be maintained in a way that will reduce the chance of food becoming contaminated. Poorly maintained or damaged premises or equipment may result in possible contamination of food. A maintenance program should be established to,

- ensure utensils and all fixtures and equipment are clean and free from damage,
- maintain the premises, including all fixtures, fittings and equipment in a clean, tidy and undamaged condition,
- routinely check the condition and good working order of premises and equipment,
- identify any issues and action taken to rectify, and
- reflect evidence of regular maintenance by maintaining copies of service reports.

5.2 Thermometer Calibration: Services must have a probe thermometer to measure the temperature of food. Prior to use ensure thermometers are cleaned and sanitised. Thermometers must be accurate to + or – 1 C. Thermometers should be calibrated every six months. Thermometers can be calibrated using the ice point check or boiling point check.

Ice Point (0 C)

1. Fill a cup with crushed ice and a little water.
2. Place probe thermometer in the centre of the cup ensuring it does not touch the base of the cup.
3. Leave for 5-10 minutes.
4. Take the reading. If the thermometer is accurate it should read 0 C.

Boiling Point (100 C)

1. Boil some water and place in a cup.
2. Place probe thermometer in the centre of the cup ensuring it does not touch the base of the cup.
3. Leave for a few minutes until a steady reading can be taken.
4. Take the reading. If the thermometer is accurate it should read 100 C.

Fridge / Freezer Thermometer - A calibrated probe thermometer can be used to check the accuracy of fridge / freezer thermometers.

1. Place the thermometer probe switched on inside the fridge or freezer.
2. Compare the probe reading with the fridge or freezer thermometer.

6.0 CLEANING AND SANITISATION

6.1 Cleaning: Effective cleaning helps protect against the spread of bacteria that can cause food borne illness. A surface needs to be thoroughly cleaned before it is sanitised. Cleaning helps remove 90% of the bacteria present. The following practices should be undertaken to ensure effective cleaning,

- pre-clean before food preparation commences,
- wipe up spills as they happen,
- use of warm soapy water to remove food debris and dissolve grease and dirt to ensure the surfaces are clean and free from visible matter and odours,
- rinse with water,
- allow to air dry,
- if tea towels or oven mitts are used they need to be cleaned and sanitised regularly,
- use single use paper towels where possible,
- if using a dishwasher, use the hottest rinse cycle available, to ensure utensils are thoroughly cleaned and sanitised,
- ensure the dishwasher is cleaned regularly so there is no accumulation of food residue, and
- adhere to detergent manufacturer's instructions,

6.2 Sanitisation: Sanitising is the process of applying chemical sanitisers to an already

clean surface or equipment to kill bacteria that survives the cleaning process. A sanitiser should kill 99.9% of bacteria. To correctly sanitise,

- only sanitise surfaces after cleaning,
- adhere to chemical sanitiser manufacturer's instructions, and
- allow to air dry or use single use paper towels.

6.3 Pest Control: Services must take all practical measures to eradicate and prevent pests in the kitchen or food preparation areas. Regularly check the kitchen and food preparation areas for any pest activity or signs of pests. Regularly,

- maintain the kitchen or food preparation area and equipment in a clean and hygienic condition,
- check dry food packaging is not open or damaged allowing pests to enter,
- ensure that any opened food stock is always stored in food containers above the floor,
- prevent entry points for pests,
- fix any holes, cracks or crevices where pest can harbor,
- remove rubbish and ensure garbage storage areas are clean and dry,
- rectify any identified pest activity, and
- maintain copies of pest control reports.

6.4 Garbage disposal: Maintain hygienic premises and pest control measures by ensuring,

- garbage containers always have bin liners,
- garbage containers especially lids are kept clean free from waste,
- pedal or swing top bins are used to reduce risk of contact transmission,
- broken glass is disposed into special containers or wrapping, and
- hands are washed after handling garbage.

7.0 ALLERGEN CONTROL

It is important that information about food products is available as some children who attend the service may have severe allergies to certain types of foods. It is important to ensure that the food being prepared for each child is safe.

Cross contamination can occur when a food containing an allergen such as peanuts, milk or eggs, is transferred to a food that does not contain an allergen. It is important that control measures be implemented to control allergens. Some strategies for prevention is to,

- have a system to identify children with any allergies,
- exclude the food allergen from the menu,
- check food labels and identify foods that may contain allergens,
- thoroughly wash, rinse and sanitise utensils and equipment used to prepare food for children with allergies,
- ensure alternative meals are always prepared for children with allergies,
- label the alternative meal and the child for which it is intended,
- ensure children do not swap or share food at meal times, and
- ensure only permanent staff closely supervise and serve children with allergies at mealtimes.

8.0 PERSONAL HYGIENE

8.1 Personal Health: The cook or staff handling, cooking or preparing food need to avoid contamination of the food. They must,

- notify the centre Director / Coordinator if ill,
- not handle food if there is a risk of food contamination as a result of the illness, and
- notify the centre Director / Coordinator if they suspect food contamination has occurred.

8.2 Personal Hygiene – Before Work: The cook or food handlers should follow good personal health and hygiene practices by,

- wearing a clean uniform (cook) and apron (educators),
- ensuring coverings such as aprons are not worn outside of the kitchen or food handling area,
- tying back long hair and taking precautions to prevent hair contaminating the food,
- removing loose jewellery and avoid wearing jewellery on hands and wrists, and
- ensuring fingernails are kept short and clean.

8.3 Personal Hygiene – at Work: The cook or food handlers must follow good personal hygiene practices to not compromise the safety of food by,

- not eating, sneezing, blowing, coughing, spitting or smoking around food,
- preventing unnecessary contact with ready to eat food,
- avoiding eating the food, except tasting with a clean spoon,
- using disposable paper towels for wiping hands, avoiding tea towels,
- using tongs, forks or gloves when serving food ready to eat foods, ensuring there is a barrier between you and the food when serving, and
- covering cuts, sores or abrasions with a blue waterproof covering.

8.4. Handwashing: The cook or food handlers need to wash hands,

- thoroughly using hot soapy water and dry with single use paper towels,
- before starting work,
- before and after handling food,
- before and after using the toilet,
- when changing from raw to cooked foods,
- after coughing, sneezing or using a tissue,
- after touching the hair, scalp or body,
- after handling cleaning chemicals,
- after handling rubbish,
- after cleaning,
- after eating or drinking, and
- when gloves are removed, discarded or replaced with a new pair with the change of tasks.

9.0 STAFF TRAINING

There must be a Food Safety Supervisor at each centre. All staff who handle food must have appropriate skills and knowledge in food safety and food hygiene. This training can

be undertaken during,

- induction of new staff to the service,
- on the job food safety training with the Centre Director / Coordinator,
- in-house SCECS training,
- external courses such as SITXFSA001 - Use hygiene practices for food safety or SITXFSA002 - Participate in safe food handling practices, and
- internal or external allergy awareness courses.

It is essential that the cook, within Early Education and Care services where food is cooked and served to children, holds Food Safety Supervisor training delivered by a registered training organisation (RTO), to recognise and prevent risks associated with food handling and can supervise others in safe food handling practices. It is also important that training in Menu Planning and Nutrition is held in line with Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) competencies.

10. RESOURCES/REFERENCES

- Education and Care National Regulations and Law
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/national-regulations>
- NSW Food Act 2003 -
<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2003/43>
- Food Standards Code - Australia New Zealand - FSANZ
<https://www.foodstandards.gov.au>
- NSW Food Authority - Children's Services Voluntary Food Safety Program Template
https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Documents/industry/children_services_fsp_template.pdf

11. APPENDICES

- Food Safety Program - Appendix 1 - Daily Cleaning & Sanitation
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 2 - Fridge / Freezer Temperature Log
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 3 - Food Temperature
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 4 - Rejected Foods
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 5 - Maintenance Check
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 6 - Suppliers List
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 7 - Pest Control Record
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 8 - Thermometer Calibration
- Food Safety Program - Appendix 9 - Annual Cleaning

12. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of gaps, the service will review this policy every three years.

In accordance with R. 172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled in the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

The authorisation and amendment history for this document must be listed in the following table:

Version	Authorised by	Approval date	Effective Date	Sections modified
1	Approved Provider – SCECS Management	May 2020	May 2020	New Policy
2	Pedagogy & Practice Manager	May 2022	May 2025	Revised Policy
3	COO	September 2025	September 2025	Food Safety Supervisor required at each service