ROBE CHILD CARE ON WHEELS SERVICE

NUTRITION AND FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Responsible Officer:	*Manager Childcare Services*
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Relevant Regulations:	EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS S. 2A Paramount consideration—safety, rights and best interests of children S.166A Offences relating to inappropriate conduct 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 the 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 must be followed 171 Policies and procedures to be kept available 172 Notification of change to policies or procedures

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National Quality Standards (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

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (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 followed at all times.

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 Australian Government's *Get Up & Grow-Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood* and *Eat for Health* resources.

RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Anaphylaxis Management Policy Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Enrolment Policy	Excursions/Incursions Policy Governance Policy Health and Safety Policy Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy

PURPOSE

Our Service is committed to supporting healthy eating and positive food practices for children, recognising the important role nutrition plays in children's growth, development and wellbeing.

We work in partnership with families and align with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* to promote healthy food and drink choices and foster lifelong healthy eating habits.

This policy outlines our commitment to:

- promoting nutritious and balanced food and drink choices
- creating positive, inclusive and culturally responsive mealtime environments
- supporting children to develop healthy relationships with food
- ensuring safe and hygienic food handling practices.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, students, volunteers and management of the Service.
For the purpose of this policy, food handlers include kitchen staff, educators and any staff involved in the preparation, serving or handling of food.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service ensures that the safety, health and wellbeing of children are the paramount consideration in all decision-making. This principle underpins all practices relating to nutrition, food safety, and mealtime environments ensuring that children are protected from harm and supported in their wellbeing at all times.

All food prepared by the Service or families will endeavour to be consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and provide children with a nutritious and balanced menu. Consideration will also be made to each child's dietary requirements, allergies, medical conditions, cultural practices, and family practices to ensure their safety and inclusion.

Food will be prepared, handled and stored in accordance with the Service's Food Safety Program with a strong focus on minimising risks to children. All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements. All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

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NUTRITION

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING AND APPROPRIATE INTRODUCTION OF SOLID FOODS

Our Service will:

- provide a suitable place within the Service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk
- support mothers who are breastfeeding their infant
- ensure the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle-feeding
- in consultation with families, offer cooled pre-boiled water as an additional drink from around 6 months of age
- where breastfeeding is discontinued before 12 months of age, substitute with a commercial infant formula (in consultation with parents)
- always bottle-feed babies by holding baby in a semi-upright position
- never prop bottles to allow children to bottle-feed alone
- ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced around 6 months of age (in consultation with parents)
- adjust the texture of foods offered between 6 and 12 months of age to match the baby's developmental stage
- offer a variety of foods to babies from all the food groups
- always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle-feeding and eating practices at all times.

Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents

OUR SERVICE WILL:

WHERE FOOD IS PROVIDED BY THE SERVICE:

- plan and display the Service's *Menu Record* (at least two weeks at a time) that is based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- regularly review the menu to ensure it meets best practice guidelines
- develop the menu in consultation with children, educators and families

- consult with health professionals to support the menu development, including dietitians for children with special dietary requirements (such as vegetarian and vegan diets), as well as dentists and speech therapists
- respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by families.

WHERE 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
- provide information to families on how to read the *Nutritional Information Panel* on food and drink labels
- provide space in a refrigerator for storing lunchboxes or insulated lunch bags
- ensure insulated lunchboxes are unzipped to allow cool air to circulate
- 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).

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 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
- require staff responsible for preparing, serving and supervising food for children with food allergies undertake the *All about Allergens for Children's Education and Care (CEC)* online courses- Food Allergy Aware Training

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- display a notice prominently in the main entrance of the Service stating that a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis is being cared for or educated at the Service, and provide details of the allergen/s [note: this notice should not identify the child]
- 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 and food handlers
- ensure any changes to children's individual dietary requirements are recorded and communicated to all staff and food handlers
- require all staff handling food attend basic safe food handling training, including an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- maintain an up-to-date *Food Safety Certificate Register* to provide evidence of safe food handling training for all food handlers
- display the weekly menu in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view
- ensure the weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week
- review the menu on a regular basis, every 6 months. Amendments made to the Service menu will be recorded.
- 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
- notify parents/guardians as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the Service. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record.*

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- notify the regulatory authority of any serious incident or complaints alleging the safety, health or wellbeing of children has been compromised within 24 hours of the incident or the time that the person becomes aware of the incident or complaint
- conduct a review of practices following a serious incident, such as a food poisoning outbreak, including an assessment of areas for improvement.

EDUCATORS/ FOOD HANDLERS WILL:

- ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both indoor and outdoor environments
- 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 and risk minimisation plans are developed and implemented, in accordance with the *Medical Conditions Policy*
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that pose a choking risk
- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- actively supervise children during mealtimes to ensure safety and wellbeing
- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices
- participate in safe food handling training as required, including completion of an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- keep records relating to the safe handling of food, where required
- consult with children, families, educators and relevant health professionals (e.g. dietitians) when reviewing the Service *Menu Record*
- follow the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* for serving sizes and different types of food
- display current nutritional information for families and provide regular updates
- consider the needs of various age groups at the service - mealtimes may be offered progressively or at different times
- ensure infants are fed individually and in a safe and responsive manner
- provide age and developmentally appropriate utensils and furniture for each child
- ensure food is not used as a form of punishment, reward or bribe
- ensure children are not force fed, coerced or pressured to eat food they do not want or choose to eat, recognising that such practices may constitute inappropriate conduct and pose a risk to children's safety, wellbeing and dignity

- encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes
- promote healthy eating habits through intentional teaching and inclusion of nutrition in the educational program
- communicate with families about their child's food intake and discuss any concerns respectfully
- encourage families, where appropriate, to support consistent healthy eating practices at home
- ensure pets or animals are not present in kitchen or food preparation areas.

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. 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).

During warmer weather, the risk of foodborne illnesses increases. Our Service will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning including:

- maintaining proper temperature control for perishable foods
- ensuring refrigerators are set to recommended temperature of 5◦C or below, regularly monitoring and recording temperatures to guarantee food safety
- emphasising hand hygiene for staff and children and encourage frequent hand washing before and after meals
- implementing food safety practices to minimise the risk of cross-contamination
- ensuring staff are aware of heightened increase in allergic reactions and maintain consistent allergen management
- consider the impact of the sun on food safety when eating meals outside
- use insulated containers to keep perishable food cool and avoid leaving food exposed to direct sunlight.

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BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD

Our Service will:

- ensure food supplies have been ordered in a timely manner
- 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 selecting 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

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 -18°C or below
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked and recorded daily (see *Refrigeration Temperature Control Register*)
- store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods
- ensure fresh meat is not stored in the fridge for more than 3 days (unless otherwise specified)
- 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' or expiry date
    - the date the food was opened or prepared
    - details of any allergens present in the food

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- transfer the contents of opened cans into appropriate food-safe containers
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening
- cool cooked food safely before refrigeration (e.g. in shallow containers) and refrigerate as soon as steam has stopped rising to minimise time in the temperature danger zone
- not reuse disposable single-use containers (e.g., Chinese food containers)
- store dry foods in labelled and sealed, air-tight containers if not in original packaging
- store dry foods off the floor (minimum 30 cm) in cupboards or pantry areas
- not place anything on the floor of a walk-in pantry (as containers of any type create easy access to shelves for mice and rats)
- store bulk dry foods only in food-safe and airtight containers
- use the FIFO (first in, first out) rule for all foods (dry, chilled, and frozen) to ensure rotation of stock so that older stock is used first
- store cleaning supplies and chemicals separately from food items
- ensure breastmilk or infant formula are stored within the main section of the fridge (not in the door) and clearly labelled with the child's name and date of expression or preparation.

PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD

Our Service will:

- ensure that all cooked food reaches a minimum internal temperature of 75°C
- ensure cooked food is served promptly or maintained at 60°C or above until ready to serve
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5°C until serving
- discard any potentially hazardous food left in the temperature danger zone 2 hours or more and do not reheat
- reheat cooked food (if required, for example for a child who was sleeping at lunch time) to a temperature of 70°C (but only ever reheat once. Discard if the food is not eaten after being reheated)
- keep cooked and ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods at all times
- defrost food safely in the refrigerator or microwave, not at room temperature
- wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water before preparation
- ensure unused washed fruit or vegetables are thoroughly dry before returning to storage
- discard any food that has come into contact with the floor

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- thoroughly clean and sanitise kitchen utensils and equipment between use with different foods and/or between different tasks
- minimise cross-contamination by ensuring separate utensils and colour-coded cutting boards
- ensure colour-coded systems are clearly displayed and consistently followed. Common colours are:
    - Blue: raw fish/seafood
    - Green: fruit and vegetables
    - Red: raw meat
    - Brown: cooked meat
    - Yellow: raw poultry
    - White: bakery and dairy
- 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 allergen-safe practices are implemented, including use of separate, clearly identifiable utensils and equipment
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- 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
- implement a two person check to ensure the '*right child gets the right meal*' for example: a checklist is developed to record children's names, their allergies, health needs
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food
- store left-over food promptly in the refrigerator or discard as appropriate
- ensure the safe handling of breastmilk, including during transportation, storage, thawing, warming and during preparation.

CLEANING

Our Service will:

- ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation
- record cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces (see *Kitchen Cleaning Checklist*)

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- 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 or placed in the dishwasher
- 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.

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS

Our Service will ensure:

- clean clothing is worn by food handlers (such as an apron or appropriate jacket)
- long hair is tied back or covered with a net
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food (e.g., rings and bracelets)
- nails are kept short and clean and no nail polish is worn (as it can chip into food and hide dirt under the nails)
- strict hand-washing hygiene is adhered to, including washing hands each time they return to the kitchen before continuing with food preparation duties
- gloves to be worn when handling food and tongs used
- wounds or cuts are covered with a brightly coloured, waterproof dressing (that will easily be seen if it falls off), and gloves will be worn over any dressings
- staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

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 5°C or above 60°C), with consideration to the safe eating temperature requirements of children
- ensure separate cutting boards are used for raw meat and chicken, fruit and vegetables, and utensils and hands are washed before touching other foods

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- 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 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
- 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 and unhurried mealtime environment that supports children to eat, communicate and enjoy social interactions
- encourage older toddlers and pre-schoolers to assist to set and clear the 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 and cues for hunger and satiety and not pressure or insist that a child eat
- be patient and supportive of children who are developing eating skills, including those who may be messy or slow eaters
- encourage children to try different foods without coercion or pressure
- ensure food is not used as a reward, bribe or withhold food for disciplinary purposes, recognising that such practices may constitute inappropriate conduct
- role-model and discuss safe food handling with children.

SERVICE PROGRAM

Our Service will:

- foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the educational program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating
- encourage children to participate in a variety of 'hands-on' food preparation experiences

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- 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.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

Cooking experiences support children to develop knowledge and skills and positive attitudes towards healthy eating. These experiences provide opportunities to explore new foods, share cultural practices and build practical life skills.

Educators will actively supervise children and ensure all cooking experiences are conducted safely, with appropriate hygiene practices and risk minimisation strategies in place.

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 up-to-date information regarding children's allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and dietary requirements, and work in partnerships with families to ensure these needs are safely met
- communicate regularly with families about food, nutrition and learning experiences within the Service
- provide current information and guidance to support families in providing 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 not required for a balanced diet) with families, and where necessary, implement agreed strategies to support alternatives while maintaining children's dignity and wellbeing.

FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS FOR STATE/TERRITORIES

See Safe Food Australia (guide to the food safety standards in the Food Standards Code). Food regulators also have information to help food businesses in their jurisdiction understand the requirements of this standard. See the web links below:

- South Australia

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Nutrition and Food Safety Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management. All families will be notified 14 days before any policy change that may have a significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Service or the family's ability to utilise the Service.