

QA2

NUTRITION and FOOD SAFETY POLICY



NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS (NQS)

QUALITY AREA

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

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

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
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.

RELATED POLICIES AND RECORDS

Enrolment Policy
Parent Handbook
Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy
Bottle Register Record
Breastfeeding Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Fridge Temperature Record

AIM OF POLICY

At Story House we aim to promote good nutrition and healthy food habits and attitudes to all children and families at the service. We also aim to support children with food allergies, dietary requirements, or restrictions, and specific cultural or religious practices.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, team members, management, and visitors to our Story House services.

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OUR APPROVED PROVIDER WILL ENSURE

- That obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met.
- They take reasonable steps to ensure that the policy and procedures are current, reviewed regularly, and communicated to educators, team members and stakeholders.
- They take reasonable steps to inform and support educators and team members regarding their responsibilities in always implementing the policy and procedures.
- They take reasonable steps to ensure that Service Managers, educators, team members and volunteers follow the policy and procedures.
- Copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to Service Managers, educators, team members, stakeholders and volunteers and are available for inspection.
- They notify Families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will:
 - Affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or
 - Significantly impact the service's education and care of children or

Significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service

OUR SERVICE MANAGER WILL ENSURE

- They are aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances, and special diets and consult with families to develop individual management plans and this is communicated to all educators and service cook.
- In conjunction with the service cook that young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking.
- They encourage team members and educators to complete regular professional development supplied online by Story House.
- They monitor in conjunction with service cook that the guidelines for serving different types of food and the serving sizes in the guidelines are implemented.
- They display nutritional information for families and keep them regularly updated.
- The weekly menu is displayed in an accessible and prominent area for parents to view.
- The weekly menu is accurate and describes the food and beverages provided each day of the week and if there are any changes to the menu Service Manager will communicate with families alerting them to the different food supplied to children on the day of the changes.
- They monitor that food is not used as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe.
- They monitor that child are not force fed or being required to eat food they do not like or more than they want to eat.
- Tell families how to access the *Nutrition and Food Safety policy* in Storypark 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

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informal discussion from authentic association or departments e.g., Nutrition Australia.

OUR EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE MEALTIME

- They ensure the *Medical, Family Request and Preference Service Summary list is checked and* photo cards are used to allocate meals to the right child, and to check with co-educators to clearly identify each child's food preference and/or allergies.
- They consider the needs of various age groups at the service. Mealtimes may be offered progressively or at different times.
- Age and developmentally appropriately utensils and furniture are provided for each Child.
- Monitor that all children remain seated while eating and drinking.
- Ensure all children are always supervised whilst eating and drinking.
- They monitor that water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
- They 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. Each space at the table is for a child or adult.
- Tables are not crowded with children to avoid children taking food from another plate.
- Encourage water after the meal – swish and swoosh as outlined in *Dental Policy*.
- Children will eat in small groups with one educator role modelling and having positive conversation about food.
- They support, nurture, and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- They 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.
- They respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, do not insist he/she eats.
- They are patient with messy or slow eaters.
- They role model and discuss safe food handling with children.
- They do not use food as a form of punishment or to be used as a reward or bribe.
- They do not force feed a child or require that the child eats food they do not like or more than they want to eat.
- They monitor and encourage toddlers to be independent and develop social skills at mealtimes.
- They encourage older toddlers and preschool / kindergarten Children 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.



Safety – We value the delivery of safe places for the mental and physical wellbeing of all.

IMPLEMENTATION

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 that meet the requirements for children according to the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

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WHEN FOOD IS PROVIDED BY THE SERVICE

OUR COOK WILL

- Provide children with a wide variety of healthy and nutritious foods for meals and snacks including fruit and vegetables, wholegrain cereal products, dairy products, lean meats, and alternative foods high in protein as outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Evaluate, plan, and display the service menu, alongside the Service Manager that is based on sound menu planning principles recommended by Australian nutrition guidelines.
- Vary the meals and snacks on the menu to keep children interested and to introduce children to a range of healthy food ideas.
- Complete a three-monthly review of the menu to ensure it meets best practice guidelines - usually prior to the beginning of each season.
- Present food children in a way which visually encourages children to eat.
- Develop the menu in consultation with children, educators, and families.
- Respect and accommodate children's cultural or religious dietary practices as requested by Families.
- Play a role in educating and influencing educators about the importance of food nutrition and presentation.
- Allergy and dietary preference photo cards are allocated to the right child on the appropriate food trolley to ensure children are presented with the right foods.

WHEN FOOD IS BROUGHT FROM HOME

OUR EDUCATORS WILL:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and that are suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- 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.
- Use the routine app on Storypark or paper based to track food eaten by children.

COOKING WITH CHILDREN

WHEN COOKING WITH CHILDREN, EDUCATORS WILL:

- Develop children's knowledge and skills regarding healthy eating habits.
- Provides opportunities for children to be introduced to new foods, sharing of recipes and cooking skills.
- Check any children who have allergies to food and ensure ingredients in the cooking experiences will not compromise children.
- Be vigilant to ensure that the experience remains safe, and relevant food hygiene practices are adhered to, a risk assessment will need to be filled out if heat is used when cooking e.g., electric frypan.

SUPPORTING BREAST FEEDING MOTHERS

BREAST FEEDING AND BREAST MILK

- Provide a suitable place within the service where mothers can breastfeed their babies or express breast milk.
- Support mothers to continue breastfeeding until babies are at least 12 months of age while offering appropriate complementary foods from around 6 months of age.
- Support the safe handling of breast milk and infant formula including transporting, storing, thawing, warming, preparing, and bottle feeding, refer to Storage of breast milk poster.
- Ensure when an educator is feeding a baby a bottle, they will be held in a semi upright position. Children under 12 months will always be held when having a bottle even when they become independent (no prop feeding in any of our services).
- All milk will be discarded after it has been heated.
- Breast milk which is not used after heating can be sent home. Story House educators will not reheat breast milk.

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EDUCATORS IN INFANT ROOMS WILL:

- Ensure appropriate foods (type and texture) are introduced from 6 months of age in conjunction with parents/guardians.
- 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.
- Children who are starting solids will be offered separate food to ensure they have the opportunity to taste different foods.
- Always supervise babies while drinking and eating, ensuring safe bottle feeding and eating practices at all times.

STORY HOUSE FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

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.
- Story House Service/s will strictly adhere to food hygiene standards to prevent the risk of food poisoning.

BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD

To ensure the health and food safety is followed the cook or educators will:

- 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.
- Food will be covered when being moved from the kitchen to other parts of the service.
- Avoid buying food items in damaged, swollen, leaking or dented packaging.
- Always check eggs within cartons: never accept dirty or cracked eggs.
- 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)

ONLINE SHOPPING

- Ensure food items are delivered in packaging that keeps food out of danger zones (5 °C to 60 °C) and within delivery window as provided by the company.
- Ensure products selected are high quality.
- Ensure products are unpacked promptly upon receiving goods.
- Use online companies that comply with Story House preferred suppliers.

STORING FOOD

- 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 daily and recorded on the *Fridge Temperature Record*.
- Store raw foods below cooked foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross contamination by foods dripping onto other foods.
- 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.

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- Place left over hot food in an appropriate sealed container in the refrigerator as soon as the steam has stopped rising. Food can be cooled quickly to this point by placing in smaller quantities in shallow containers, reducing the amount of time sitting in the danger zone.
- Not reuse disposable containers (e.g., Chinese food containers).
- Store dry foods in labelled and sealed, airtight containers if not in original packaging.
- Store dry foods in cupboards or if in a walk-in pantry, on shelving no lower than 30cm from the floor.
- 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 separate to food items.

PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD

OUR COOK WILL

- Ensure that all cooked food is cooked through and reaches 75°C.
- Ensure that cooked food is served promptly or use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60°C until ready to serve.
- Ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5°C until ready to serve.
- Discard any cooked food that has been left in the danger zone for two or more hours. 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.
- 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.
- Avoid cross contamination by ensuring that separate knives and utensils are used for different foods.
- Avoid cross contamination by ensuring that colour coded cutting boards are used. Have a code in the kitchen to for each board relating to the type of food. For example:
 - 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 food allergies and intolerances are catered for by using separate easily identifiable cutting boards, utensils, and kitchen equipment (e.g., Using a colour code, or food-safe permanent marker).
- The *Medical, Family Request and Preference Service Summary* list is updated monthly or when a new child enrolls at the service who needs to be included on this summary list. and placed on each food trolley. The dietary/allergy preference photo cards are used to allocate meals to the right child, and to clearly identify each child's food preference and/or allergies.
- Ensure all educators and team members 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 cross-contamination.
- Photo cards are placed on the food relating to the individual child.
- Ensure that unwell team members do not handle food.

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CLEANING

- Ensure that food preparation areas and surfaces are cleaned both before, after, and during any food preparation.
- 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.
- 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. alert Service Manager if any issues who will advise Facilities Manager.
- 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 in the sun if possible.
- Replace any cleaning equipment that shows signs of wear or permanent soiling – mops buckets dustpans brooms.

Colour codes for cleaning areas in the service

The following are the colour codes for each area of the service. (The below table can be found in the resource section of The Library as a poster.

Colour	Area
Blue	General cleaning
Green	Kitchen and food preparation
Red	Toilets and bathrooms
Yellow	Infectious/isolation

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR SERVICE COOK

- Clean clothing is worn by the service Cook. Story House provides a chef jacket, and the expectation is that it is worn.
- Long hair is tied back and covered with a net our under “chef’s hat”.
- 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.
- 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- usually blue.
- Service Cooks who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

ALL TEAM MEMBERS HANDLING FOOD WILL

- Ensure children and team members 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. Gloves need to be worn when handling raw food.
- Ensure educators wash their hands prior to using tongs/serving utensils when ready to eat food is being served.
- Age-appropriate service utensils need to be presented when children are servicing themselves.
- 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.
- Discourage children from handling other children’s food and utensils.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM WILL:

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- Fosters awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices including 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.
- As part of the educational program, they support children to develop self-help servicing skills.
- Embed vegetable gardens and growing fruit trees (depending on location).
- Embed the importance of healthy eating and physical activity in everyday activities and experiences.
- Discuss with children where food comes from and organise opportunities for children to visit places various food places to support their learning e.g., community gardens, plant nurseries.

SOURCE

- Australian Children's education & care quality authority. ACECQA
- Education and care services national law act 2010.
- Education and care services national regulations. 2018
- Guide to the National Quality Standard. 2020
- Code of ethics
- United convention on the rights of the child
- *Food act 2003*
- *Food regulation 2015*
- Food safety standards (Australia only). (2015): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/industry/safetystandards/pages/default.aspx>
- *Food standards Australia and New Zealand act 1991*
- Food standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe food Australia – a guide to the food safety standard (3rd ed.): <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx>
- Food standards Australia New Zealand: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/pages/default.aspx>

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