

2-P20: Food Handling, Safety and Nutrition Procedure



Responsible	Nominated Supervisor, Centre Team		
Accountable 1	Chief Compliance and Quality Officer	Accountable 2	Nominated Supervisor
Consulted	Compliance Team, Policy Committee, Licensing Officer		
Informed	All staff, students, volunteers, families		

Policy Statement

The objective of this procedure is to articulate Affinity Education Group's compliance with National Law and Regulations, including amendments from the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations WA 2012.

The steps outlined in this procedure assist educators and families to ensure the health and safety of food and drinks is maintained. This procedure is divided into three parts: Part A - for family provided food; Part B - for centre provided food; and Part C - for nutritional and dietary requirements.

All children require nourishment and nutrition for optimum growth and for short and long term health. Affinity Education Group has the responsibility of ensuring children's nutritional needs are met in a safe and hygienic manner with respect to individual cultural and dietary requirements, choices and preferences.

Part A: For centres where families provide food and drink, or in instances where families prefer to provide their own food and drink, Affinity Education Group supports family's rights and choices. Affinity Education Group encourages families to provide a variety of healthy options for their child and will give feedback to families about likes and dislikes to meet the child's needs. Where children's health, well-being and nutritional intake is not compromised, educators will follow family practices to ensure consistency is provided. Health and safety is also a priority and educators will implement current recommended practices and negotiate strategies used with families.

Part B: For centres that provide food, Affinity Education Group will provide fresh, healthy, nutritional and safe food to children. All food and drink will be received, stored, prepared and served in a manner that complies with the food safety standards and ensures food and drinks are safe to consume.

Part C: Many children in long day care may receive 50% to 70% of their food intake whilst at the centre, therefore it is important to provide nutritionally appropriate food for them. Affinity Education Group endeavours to support children and families in developing good food attitudes and habits as well as providing nutritional information for the families. Children will enjoy a wide variety of fresh, healthy, nutritional and safe food and drinks. Family and children's preferences, individual dietary needs and cultural requirements will be taken into account when preparing the menu.

All personnel responsible for receiving and preparing food will have a thorough knowledge of the applicable Food Safety Program and complete a Cook Induction on the Learning Hub. All employees responsible for handling and serving food will complete Food Safety at Affinity annually on the Learning Hub.

Procedure Strategies: PART A - Family Provided Food

Information and education

- During enrolment, families will be informed of the requirement to provide food for their child.
- For centres that do provide food, families are able to provide food and drink for their child if they prefer.
- The centre will promote healthy eating practices with the children and families by incorporating learning opportunities, discussions, displays and providing information on suitable 'lunchbox' ideas.
- Educators are made aware of any children with individual dietary needs such as allergies or cultural requirements prior to the child's entry to the room/centre.
- Educators will follow medical management, risk minimisation and communication plans for children with medical related food needs. Educators will follow family recommendations for children with cultural dietary needs, where those practices are not detrimental to the child's health.

Links to ECSNR 2011 and WA 2012:

R77 1b,2b R78 1,2 R79 1,2
R80 1,2

Links to NQS:

QA2 QA 4

Related Forms:

All Food Safety Program forms
2-F5 Medical Management, Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan
2-F36 Individual Dietary Requirements Plan
4-F57 Cook induction
2-F26 a,b,c,d Daily Information Sheet
2-F44 Food-related Needs Register
2-F45 Food-related ID Cards

Related Processes:

3.2.12 Manage Children's Food-Related Needs
3.2.01-3.2.05
3.2.14 Manage Food Recall

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- The centre has strategies in place to ensure individual food-related needs are met.
- Families are responsible for updating children's health and medical records on XAP.

Storage, handling and preparation

- Refrigerators are available for every room and/or prep room/kitchenette depending on size, layout and age configuration for storage of food and drink.
- Families and children are encouraged to put their child's lunch in the refrigerator in their child's room on arrival at the service. Water bottles may be stored in the refrigerator or at room temperature.
- Bottles containing any type of milk will be stored in the main body of the refrigerator towards the back, and not in the door in individually labelled baskets.
- Refrigerator temperature will be monitored daily as per the Food Safety Program. Storage temperatures are below 5°C for a refrigerator and -18°C for a freezer.
- Refrigerators will be cleaned at least once a week or more often as required.
- Insulated lunch bags should be stored with their lid/closure slightly open to allow cool refrigerated air to circulate around the food.
- Educators and children will wash hands with soap and running water before coming into contact with food.
- Gloves are to be worn as outlined in the Food Safety Program.

Heating

- When heating family provided food, educators will ensure the food is in a microwave safe container and use the microwave at 30 second or less intervals. On removing food from the microwave, educators will thoroughly stir the food to disperse the heat evenly. A food thermometer will be used to ensure the food is heated to 75°C and remain at this temperature for two minutes.
- All hot food will be tested prior to serving to children to ensure it is at a safe and appropriate temperature and will not cause burns or scalds. Food should be warm but not hot, and suitable for immediate consumption. Educators must ensure food is stirred thoroughly and tested consistently prior to serving.
- At families' request, educators may heat bottles and drinks. The following heating instructions will be implemented when heating varieties of milk or water.
 - The heating of bottles will be done in a kitchen, kitchenette or prep area, not in the room with the children
 - Wash hands thoroughly prior to handling and heating bottles and drinks
 - Stand the bottle in a container of warm (not boiling) water for up to 10 minutes. Alternatively, the bottle may be heated in a bottle warmer. Follow manufacturer's instructions as models may vary in their heating times.
 - Check the temperature of the contents of the bottle after a few minutes to prevent overheating by dripping some onto the inside of the wrist. The teat will not come into contact with the wrist.
 - The contents should feel slightly warm. If too hot, place in a container of cool water until the desired temperature of 37.5-40°C is reached.
 - Bottles will NOT be given to babies or children until the temperature has been tested.
 - Do not heat bottles in the microwave. Microwaves distribute heat unevenly causing unexpected hot spots as well as the variance in models makes heating times unreliable.
 - Only heat bottles once. Any remaining milk will be discarded and not reheated.
 - Where milk has been defrosted, do not refreeze.
 - At families' request, water can be served refrigerated, at room temperature or warm. Warming procedures for water are the same as mentioned above.
 - Where families request that children be given cooled, boiled water, bottles, cups and drink bottles will not be filled directly from a kettle or electric jug. Boiled water will be poured into a plastic jug and cooled to 37.5-40°C or below. Bottles, cups and drink bottles will then be filled from the plastic jug.
- Families will take lunch boxes and any remaining food home at the end of each day.
- Communication will be maintained as to the child's food consumption and likes and dislikes regularly.
- Families may bring in foods to share with the children for cultural celebrations such as birthdays or social gatherings such as family morning teas in consultation with the lead educator or Centre Manager. A comprehensive list of ingredients is required to accompany the food to ensure educators are aware of possible allergens in the food.
- Strategies are in place to ensure food isn't used as a reward or incentive.

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Location (relevant to Part A and B)

Children with bottles will have their bottle while seated at the table or highchair if capable or held by educators. Children will not be placed to bed or in a cot with bottles or propped on pillows or lounge chairs. Any child seated at a table or highchair with a bottle will not engage in play or other activities while having a bottle. If table activities are available at the same time they will be located at separate tables.

Food will be served in a prepared and hygienic location. This may either be at highchairs or at child sized, tables and chairs. Picnics can be facilitated provided the area is safe from hazards and remains hygienic.

Food will not be taken into unhygienic areas where contamination may occur such as bathrooms or change rooms.

Food Sharing

- Food and drinks must not be shared between children or between educators and children.
- Children must only consume food and drinks provided for them by their family or the service, unless otherwise authorised in accordance with this procedure.
- Educators must actively supervise mealtimes and eating experiences to prevent the sharing of food, drinks, utensils and drink bottles.
- Educators must reinforce that food, drinks, utensils and drink bottles are for individual use only.

Procedure Strategies: PART B - Centre Provided Food

For centres operating under an approved Food Safety Program, ensure all aspects of the approved Food Safety Program and Food Safety Booklet are complied with at all times. Contact foodsafety@affinityeducation.com.au for support in using the Food Safety Program or booklet.

All centres will complete the Food Safety Booklet (either cooking or reheating according to the type of food provided).

Personnel

All premises where food is prepared for children will be licensed and approved and will have a qualified Food Safety Supervisor reasonably available and accessible. The Food Safety Supervisor must complete the approved Food Safety Supervisor course for their state at least every 5 years. Cooks and educators handling food will complete a Food Safety at Affinity course. On induction, cooks will complete a Cook Induction. Where educators are required to perform cook duties at any time, they must also complete the Cook Induction. The Centre Manager must be confident that the person in the cook role has the required skills and knowledge.

Centre cooks will be required to wear the allocated centre specific cook uniform including hat or hairnet and apron as per approved Food Safety Program. Uniforms must be cleaned and presentable. Shoes must be sturdy, closed in and with a non-slip sole.

Cooks, educators, volunteers and anyone else assigned to the role of cook and is primarily responsible for the handling, storage and preparation of food will maintain the following safe food and hygiene guidelines:

- Wash hands thoroughly and often during the day; on arrival, between handling different types of food, before and after eating and toileting, after blowing nose, after touching a contaminated area and on departure
- Educators with health problems e.g., colds, flu, gastroenteritis, dermatitis will not be allowed to handle food.
- No jewellery except for a wedding band will be worn.
- Nails will be kept short and no nail polish to be worn.
- Any open wounds on hands/arms will be covered with a blue coloured Band-Aid and gloves worn over the top.
- No smoking or vaping in the kitchen or anywhere on premises
- Food preparation staff will not eat while preparing food.

Cooks, educators, volunteers, and anyone else assigned to the role of cook and is primarily responsible for the handling, storage and preparation of food will maintain the following safe practices:

- Inspect the kitchen, surfaces, and appliances for signs of damage or contamination.
- Ensure the door/entry to the kitchen is secure to restrict access to children.
- Not leave the kitchen unattended while the stove/cooktop is in use.
- Generally, be aware of surroundings and potential hazards and report any hazards immediately.

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Deliveries

All deliveries are to be checked for the following:

- Purchase from registered (ABN), reputable, HACCP approved suppliers who have refrigerated vans for perishable items. Check delivery of all food items so that they have an adequate shelf life and use by date.
- Return food items or do not accept the delivery of food items assessed as unsafe such as damaged packaging, temperature in the hazard zone of over 5°C, passed or on expiry date, rotten or wizened fruit and vegetables.
- Check and record delivery temperatures of meat, dairy products, and frozen foods.
- Store food immediately after delivery

Transport of Food

If cooked or prepared food is being transported from one centre to another, appropriate storage and handling is required:

- Food will be packed immediately prior to transport and will not sit idle prior to transport.
- The time taken between food preparation and arrival at the destination will not exceed 2 hours.
- Food will be stored in sealed and labelled containers and placed in an insulated container. Separate insulated containers will be used for hot and cold items.
- On receiving the food, the food temperature will be checked and stored immediately – cold food below 5°C and hot food above 60°C.

Preparation

Preparation of food will follow these safety guidelines:

- Wash fruit and vegetables before using them.
- Check stock is well within use by date prior to using.
- Use standard, written recipes.
- Ensure meats are well cooked if cooked on premises and test that the core temperature is 75°C.
- Use leftovers within two days or freeze.
- Reheat food once only and use a food thermometer to ensure food is heated to 75°C and maintained at that heat for 2 minutes.
- Discard any suspect food and record on food wastage log.
- Use separate areas for preparation of raw and cooked meats, fish, poultry, fruit, and vegetables.
- Use different coloured chopping boards for different products, wash thoroughly and allow to dry after each use.
- Prepared food is to be wrapped (plastic wrap or bag) if not being consumed straight away and labelled with product and date.

Temperature

The temperature of food and liquid is to be checked and maintained in the following ways.

- Record food and liquid temperature on delivery and during the day.
- Monitor and record the fridge (0-5°C) and freezer temperatures (-18°C), each working day.
- Keep hot foods steaming hot at above 60°C.
- A digital temperature probe is to be used to measure cooked and heated food temperature.
- To cool food, take a maximum of 2 hours to decrease 60°C to 21°C and a maximum of 4 hours from 21°C to 5°C.

All heated food and liquids will be tested prior to serving to ensure it is not too hot for children to safely consume. Food must feel warm but not hot to the touch before being offered to children.

Storage

Store and separate food according to the following methods:

- Keep perishable food refrigerated at below 5°C.
- Keep minimal perishable stock in freezers and fridges over long periods where the centre may be closed e.g., Christmas.
- Store stock off the floor.
- Store raw meats/poultry and eggs on lowest shelf of fridge. (Or store eggs on a tray to hold spills if eggs become broken.)
- Segregate raw and cooked meats, dairy products, and fresh produce in the fridge.
- Defrost food in the fridge.
- Where possible, store food in the labelled packaging it came in. Where it has been removed, ensure the product is labelled with the purchase/delivery date and the expiry date (e.g., flour stored in a canister).

Cleaning

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Cleaning and maintenance of premises to be followed:

- Wash all utensils, chopping boards and work surfaces with hot soapy water (above 74°C). Rubber gloves should be worn to protect hands from heat. Rinse well and allow to air dry.
- Keep kitchen surfaces clean - bench tops, sinks, floors, cupboards.
- Have a separate hand washing facility that has a basin, soap, and paper towels.
- Adequate rubbish bins to be provided, emptied, and cleaned daily, or more regularly as required.
- Premises to be kept in a safe, well-maintained way – lights working, cupboards and drawers open and close effectively, tiles intact, windows and doors screened to prevent dust, dirt, and pests from entering.
- Electrical equipment to be maintained in a safe, working condition and tested and tagged annually.

Menu

- Menus will be displayed for all centre users to view with details of main ingredients in each provision. Families are encouraged to view the menu and advise the cook and/or educator if their child has not previously consumed any of the foods on offer. Foods considered common allergens will not be given to babies for the first time while at the centre, e.g. eggs.
- An alternative option will be available and communicated via the menu to meet children's individual needs, if required.
- Individual alternative options are negotiated between the cook and educators and/ or family where food refusal occurs.
- Menus will be followed accurately, however there may be times when key ingredients are not available or other circumstance prevents preparing the planned menu item. Any change to the menu will be communicated by the cook via notice on the menu board and via Storypark prior to the change, and when not possible prior, as soon as possible after the meal preparation.
- Nuts and nut products will not be provided at the centre.
- Foods with a high choking risk will not be served to children under two including lollies, corn chips, popcorn, uncut grapes, (unblanched) crunchy fruit and vegetables.
- Families are encouraged to provide input and feedback on menu inclusions.
Menus will be reviewed using the Feed Australia platform, Munch & Move resources (for NSW services), or relevant state-specific healthy eating guidelines, as applicable.

Non-compliance of any of the above procedures will result in either of the following outcomes:

- educator training and/or disciplinary procedures for continual non-compliance,
- maintenance or replacement of faulty equipment,
- maintenance to food preparation area,
- review of policy and/or
- review of supplier.

Food Recall

The Food Safety Team receive notification of any food item recalled either by Food Standards Australia, local council or other organisation. The Food Safety Team notifies all centres with recommended actions as per instruction from Food Standards, council or other organisation.

Procedure Strategies: PART C - Nutrition and Dietary Requirement

- Provide food consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines for children.

Source: Caring for Children NSW

RECOMMENDED DAILY INTAKE FOR CHILDREN FOOD GROUP AND SERVE SIZES	MINIMUM SERVES DURING CHILD CARE HOURS	COMMENTS
Breads & Cereals 1 serve = 1 slice bread or ½ cup breakfast cereal or 1/3 cup cooked rice or ½ cup cooked pasta	2	Preferably wholemeal. Examples may include a variety of breads e.g. loaf, pita, wrap
Dairy Foods 1 serve = 100ml milk or 15g cheese or 100g yoghurt	1-2	Use full cream products. Examples include a glass of milk, serve of cheesy sauce.
Meat and Meat Alternatives 1 serve = 70g raw red or 75g raw white meat, 100 fish or 3/4 cup cooked legumes (baked beans, lentils, chickpeas) or 1 large egg.	0.75	Meat is a source of iron, but meat alternatives are suitable for vegetarians. Limit processed meats such as ham.
Fruit 1 serve = 1 med. size piece fruit or ½ cup tinned fruit	1	Preferably serve fresh fruit rather than juice
Vegetables 1 serve = ½ cup vegetables or 1 cup salad	2	Serve a wide variety of vegetables.

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- Develop a menu that appeals to children whilst meeting dietary intake requirements (see table above) and present food in an attractive and appealing manner.
- Use the Feed Australia platform to review menus, Munch & Move resources (NSW), or refer to state-specific healthy food guidelines, as applicable.
- Seek input and feedback from families, children, educators and nutritional sources for menu inclusions.
- Cater to the individual needs of children including, but not limited to, cultural requirements and choices, allergies and intolerances and any medical conditions.
- Support children who demonstrate food refusal. Strategies may include:
 - Encourage children to try different parts of their food
 - Talk through the different parts of the food using interesting and descriptive terms
 - Allow time for child to explore food with fingers or utensils
 - Request the cook to serve the food individually e.g. pasta with sauce on the side rather than stirred through or tasting plate of separate vegetables.
 - Request the cook to provide a suitable alternative when children show food refusal
 - Liaise with family about food preferences
 - Allow families to provide their own food for their child if they prefer
- Develop an awareness of cross-cultural eating and drinking practices and related food values. Support and incorporate individual practices where children's health and safety is not compromised.
- Hot drinks, soft drinks and energy drinks will not be permitted to be consumed by children.
- Display the menu and ensure the inclusions on the menu are accurate.
- Promote children's nutritional needs through posters and displays, parent library information, newsletters.
- Encourage healthy eating habits in the children by incorporating nutritional education into the program by way of learning opportunities, discussions and displays.
- Motivate educators to present themselves as role models, maintaining good personal nutrition and to sit with and eat with the children at mealtimes when possible. Soft drinks, hot drinks and junk food will not be consumed in the room or in children's view.
- Children will always have access to water throughout the day and be offered and encouraged to drink water frequently and especially in hot weather and after physical activity.

Nuts

Nuts and nut products will not be provided at the centre. Ensure employees and families are advised not to bring nuts and nut products into the centre.

AEG centres are 'Allergy Aware' centres. The term 'nut free' is discouraged because people can have a false sense of security or become complacent, and it can never be certain that all foods do not contain traces of nuts.

Food-Related Needs

Each child with a medical food-related need will have a medical management, risk minimisation and communication plan completed and displayed in the room, kitchen and available in other rooms. Children with a non-medical food-related need (e.g. cultural requirement) will have an individual dietary requirement form completed. This may be displayed, where space allows.

Encourage families to keep medical and individual dietary requirements up to date.

Generate a Children's Health Conditions report from XAP. Go to Reports Tab, then click on Children's Health Conditions. Display this report in rooms to communicate children's medical and individual dietary needs to all staff. Replace this report as new children enrol in the centre.

Medical conditions refers to any bodily or physical injury, defect, disease or illness that can be diagnosed by a healthcare professional based on symptoms or testing including, but are not limited to: asthma, allergies, anaphylaxis, diabetes, epilepsy, coeliac disease, heart conditions, juvenile arthritis, cystic fibrosis, and other long-term or episodic health needs. Follow POL2-P4 Medical Conditions Policy and Procedure

Dietary Requirements: are specific nutritional needs or restrictions that must be followed for health, safety, or belief-based reasons. Unlike preferences (likes/dislikes), requirements are typically necessary to avoid potential health risks or to adhere to ethical/religious rules. [FRM 2-F36 Individual Dietary Requirements.pdf](#)

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Implement the Food-Related ID System

RED ID Card - Each child with a food-related need will have red Food-related ID Cards created including their photo, their name and their needs listed. These will be laminated and used to label baskets in fridges for babies and toddlers. A red ID card will also be given to the cook each day the child is in attendance and their name written on the Food-Related Needs register. The cook will use the red ID card to label and communicate specially prepared foods each mealtime. Confirmation of this communication will be recorded by both cook and staff on the Food-Related Needs Register at each meal. Refer to 3.2.12 Manage Food-Related Needs.

WHITE ID Card - Children without a food-related will have white ID Cards created with just their photo and name. These will be used to label individual baskets in fridges for babies and toddlers.

Identification Tools (Placemats or Place Cards)

Services will implement suitable identification tools such as placemats or place cards to support the safe and effective management of children's food-related needs.

Identification Tools:

- Each child's name and/or photo should be clearly displayed to assist with identification.
- For children with food-related needs, it is recommended that their dietary requirements are listed on the tool.
- Identification tools should be made from hygienic, wipeable materials such as laminated card or acrylic.
- Any tools that come into contact with food must be cleaned with a food-grade sanitiser and dried after each use.

Individual requests

Suitable alternative foods will be provided for children with medical and non-medical individual food related needs, for example, soy milk instead of cow's milk or lentils instead of beef. There may be times when a family requests to remove an entire food group from their child's diet, requests a child to fast for a period of time or other request that impacts the child's food intake. To ensure that a child receives a well-balanced diet, written instruction from the doctor is recommended.

[FRM 2-F36 Individual Dietary Requirements.pdf](#)

Safety and Staff Training:

- All people in the cook role or standing in for the cook role must complete a Cook Induction on the Learning Hub.
- All people responsible for handling and serving food will complete Food Safety at Affinity on the Learning Hub.
- At least one member of staff on the premises at all times will have completed Anaphylaxis Management Training and be familiar with children's symptoms and use of adrenaline auto-injectors (EpiPen™)
- All educators will be aware of the location of adrenaline auto-injectors (EpiPen™)
- The Centre Manager will ensure the cook/food handler is trained in managing the provision of meals for children with allergies, intolerances, dietary needs and cultural or religious requirements including high levels of care in preventing cross contamination during storage, handling, preparation and serving of food. Training will also be given in planning appropriate menus including identifying written and hidden sources of food allergens on food labels.

Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Education and Care Services National Regulations WA 2012
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand Regulations 1994

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Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1	Oct 2013	AEG	Update ECSNR
1.2	Oct 2014	AEG	Update ECSNR
V2.16	Feb 2016	AEG	Revision
V4.17	Apr 2017	AEG	Revision
V7.17	July 2017	AEG	Cook induction
V11.17	Nov 2017	AEG	Minor revision
V12.17	Dec 2017	AEG	Minor amendment
V7.18	July 2018	AEG	Minor review
V7.19	July 2019	AEG	Scheduled Review
V11.19	Nov 2019	AEG	Minor amendment
V12.19	Dec 2019	AEG	Food-related needs
V12.20	Dec 2020	AEG	Cook induction
V12.21	Dec 2021	AEG	Added placemats, extended ID cards
V2.23	Feb 2023	AEG	SPM Reports
V7.23	July 2023	AEG	Bottles and clarified heating temp
V8.23	Aug 2023	AEG	Food refusal
V11.23	Nov 2023	AEG	Added RACI table and definition
V2.24	Feb 2024	AEG	Extended on location and SPM to XAP
V2.25	Feb 2025	AEG	Scheduled review
V7.25	July 2025	AEG	Review temperatures for serving, added no vaping, amended Identification Tools.
V13	August 2026	AEG	Clarification on food sharing.

Responsible = those who are responsible for carrying out the task

Accountable level 1 = the owner and person accountable for the sign off or approval of a task

Accountable level 2 = the person who is accountable for the task being carried out

Consulted = the person to be consulted with and whose input, opinions and feedback are crucial to the task

Informed = the person who should be informed and made aware of the task and any updates

Policy Written by: Affinity Education Group	Position: Policy Team	Date: August 2026
Approved by: Affinity Education Group	Approved Date: August 2026	Next review date: August 2026