Nutrition food & Beverage safety policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide the provision of healthy and safe food and drink for children in our care. It affirms our dedication to promoting nutritious choices and positive eating habits, supporting children's physical development, cultural values, and individual dietary needs. This policy ensures that food is prepared, stored, and served in a manner consistent with legislation, food safety standards, and best practice principles, while creating a welcoming and inclusive mealtime environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all children, families, staff, educators, visitors, and management of the OSHC Service. It covers food provision, preparation, storage, handling, and education, ensuring that all practices align with ethical standards, legislative requirements, and national guidelines.

Nutrition

Our OSHC Service encourages healthy eating by providing a variety of nutritious foods that reflect the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating and the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents. Meals and snacks are carefully planned to include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, lean meats, and other high-protein alternatives. We work in consultation with children, families, and educators to develop menus that reflect cultural diversity and accommodate religious or dietary requirements. Menus are displayed for families, reviewed regularly, and designed to engage children in exploring new foods while maintaining a positive and enjoyable eating experience.

Mealtimes and eating environment

Mealtimes at the OSHC Service are structured to be relaxed and pleasant, where educators engage children in meaningful conversation, model positive food behaviours, and encourage social interaction. Educators supervise children during eating and ensure that they remain seated to promote safety and a calm environment. These practices reflect our commitment to nurturing a positive relationship with food while supporting children's independence and social development.

Food hygiene and safety

Food safety is a priority at our OSHC Service. We adhere to rigorous hygiene practices to prevent foodborne illness, including proper cleaning, storage, and handling of all food items. Refrigerators and freezers are monitored to maintain safe temperatures, and food is rotated using the first-in, first-out principle. Dry goods, meats, dairy, and other perishables are stored separately, labelled, and checked for quality and expiration. Cleaning equipment is maintained in good condition, and staff follow strict handwashing and personal hygiene protocols. Staff who are unwell do not handle food, and gloves and utensils are used when preparing ready-to-eat items to reduce the risk of contamination.

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Food preparation and serving

Food is prepared following strict hygiene guidelines, including washing fruits and vegetables and preventing cross-contamination through separate cutting boards, utensils, and colour-coded systems. Educators are aware of children's allergies and intolerances and follow individualized management plans in consultation with families and, where required, dietitians. All staff handling food participate in relevant training to ensure ongoing knowledge of safe food practices, and meals are presented attractively to encourage children to try a variety of healthy options.

Educating children about healthy eating

Our OSHC Service integrates nutrition education into everyday experiences and program activities. Children participate in discussions about healthy food choices, hands-on cooking activities, and discovery learning to develop their knowledge and skills. Cooking experiences are conducted safely, with educators ensuring that hygiene and safety standards are maintained. These activities help children to understand the benefits of healthy eating and develop lifelong positive food habits.

Communicating with families

Families are encouraged to provide details of any food allergies, intolerances, or special dietary requirements to ensure the individual needs of each child are met. Menus are displayed for families to view easily, and open communication between educators and families ensures that children receive appropriate nutrition in line with their cultural, religious, or personal dietary needs.

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Beverage Practices

Bateau Bay OSHC ensures that children have access to safe, clean, and age-appropriate beverages throughout their time at the service. Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times, and educators encourage regular hydration, particularly during physical activities or hot weather. Milk, including alternatives for children with dietary restrictions or allergies, is provided in a safe and hygienic manner. Staff ensure that beverage containers, dispensers, and serving equipment are regularly cleaned and maintained according to hygiene protocols. Children are encouraged to pour or serve beverages themselves when appropriate, promoting independence and healthy habits. Sweetened drinks, carbonated beverages, and caffeinated beverages are not provided, in line with best practice guidelines for school-age children.

Child Safe Standards and Paramountcy Principle

The Service is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and embedding a strong child safe culture across all practices. In accordance with the Paramountcy Principle, the safety, wellbeing and best interests of the child are the primary and overriding consideration in all decisions, actions and practices undertaken by the Service, including the provision of food, beverages and nutrition practices.

This means that all food and beverage practices must prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of children above all other considerations. Educators, staff and management are required to exercise professional judgement and take all reasonable precautions to ensure that food is prepared, handled, stored and served in a safe and hygienic manner, and that individual dietary requirements, allergies and cultural needs are consistently met.

The Service will ensure that children are provided with nutritious, safe and appropriate food and beverages within a positive and supportive environment. Educators will remain vigilant in supervising children during mealtimes, responding to any risks such as choking or allergic reactions, and maintaining high standards of hygiene and food safety practices at all times. Children will be supported to develop healthy eating habits in a safe, inclusive and respectful setting.

All practices relating to nutrition, food and beverage safety must prioritise the protection of children from harm, uphold their dignity and wellbeing, and ensure that every child is safe, supported and cared for at all times

Review of policy

This policy is reviewed regularly to ensure it aligns with current legislation, the National Quality Standard, and best practice in child nutrition and food safety. Updates are communicated to staff and families to maintain awareness and consistent implementation of healthy eating and food safety practices.

Nutrition and food safety policy

Review

Date:	Changes:	Reviewed by:
26/11/2021	New policy (All updated)	Charmayne Nathan
07/06/2024	Reviewed - No changes	Orama Daniel
17/09/2025	Policy updated and condensed for famlies - Beverages info added	Charmayne Nathan
24/4/2026	Child Safe Standards & Paramountcy Principle was implemented in align with new laws and regulations	Charmayne Nathan