



P2-19: Food Safety Policy

As per Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association (QDPA) has a food safety policy and procedures in place to ensure quality practices relating to food are always followed.

Food safety is of great importance at QDPA, and specific measures are outlined, including the responsibilities of QDPA, educators and families when it comes to compliance with food safety regulations.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (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

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene, and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
160	Child enrolment records to be kept by 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 to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures



RELATED POLICIES

Administration of First Aid Policy Child Safe Environment Policy Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy Excursions and Centre Events Policy	Governance Policy Health and Safety Handbook Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy Medical Conditions Policy
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PURPOSE

QDPA is also committed to ensuring consistently high standards of food preparation and food storage and transportation are adhered to.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, educators, approved provider, nominated supervisor, visitors, students, volunteers and management of QDPA.

IMPLEMENTATION

Recent changes to the Food Standards Code and Food Act 2003 (Standard 3.2.2A) involve the appointment of a Food Safety Supervisor who must be available to supervise food handlers at the preschool. It is a requirement that both the Food Safety Supervisor and all food handlers attend food safety training. Additionally, records must be maintained relating to receiving, storage, processing, displaying and transportation of food. These records must be retained for a period of 3 months.

All kitchens and food preparation areas will comply with Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and any relevant local jurisdictional requirements (i.e., local council registrations and inspections). All staff involved in the stages of food handling have the skills and knowledge to ensure food safety is a priority.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR WILL:

- ensure educators and staff are aware of their responsibilities and obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations in relation to this policy and relevant procedures to ensure awareness of safe food handling practices
- ensure that a notice is displayed prominently in the main entrance of the preschool stating that a child diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis is being cared for or educated at the preschool, and provide details of the allergen/s (if required) (Reg. 173(2)(f)) [note: this notice should not identify the child]



- ensure new staff and educators are aware of food practices and procedures as outlined in this policy during induction and orientation
- 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
- procedures for the safe storage and heating of bottles are strictly adhered to
- appoint a Food Safety Supervisor to oversee food handlers
- ensure the Food Safety Supervisor hold a valid Food Safety Supervisor certificate and training
- ensure all staff handling food attend basic safe food handling training, including appropriate food allergy aware training.
- ensure parents/guardians are notified as soon as practicable but within 24 hours if their child is involved in a serious incident/situation at the preschool relating to food safety/food allergens. Details of the incident/situation are to be recorded on the *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* on OWNA.
- comply with Food Safety Standard 3.2.2A requirements

EDUCATORS/FOOD HANDLERS WILL:

- 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 are developed and implemented, including completing Medical Risk Minimisation Plans for children with medical conditions involving food as per Medical Conditions Policy
- ensure young children do not have access to foods that may cause choking
- ensure all children remain seated while eating and drinking
- ensure all children are always supervised children whilst eating and drinking
- participate in regular professional development to maintain and enhance knowledge about early childhood nutrition, food safety and food allergy practices



- store all bottles in an appropriate area for food preparation that complies with the food safety standards for kitchens and food preparation areas
- adhere to the procedure for the safe storage and heating of bottles
- participate in safe food handling training on a regular basis, including the completion of appropriate food allergy aware training
- keep records relating to the safe handling of food, where required

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).

QDPA 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 handwashing 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.

BUYING AND TRANSPORTING FOOD

Each preschool 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 oC to 60 oC) on the trip back to the Preschool 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

ONLINE SHOPPING

- ensure food items are delivered in packaging that keeps food out of 'danger zones' as described above 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 service company with product guarantee.

STORING FOOD

QDPA will:

- ensure the refrigerator and freezer has a thermometer and that the refrigerator is maintained at 5 oC or below and the freezer is maintained at -17 oC or below.
- ensure fridge and freezer temperatures are checked daily and recorded in OWNA fridge/freezer temperature checklist.
- 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.
- 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 o 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 and are appropriately labelled as above.
- ensure all bottles and jars are refrigerated after opening.
- 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, air-tight 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 and chemicals separate to food items.
- ensure breastmilk or formula is stored within the main section of the fridge and clearly labelled with the child's name and date of preparation.

PREPARING AND SERVING FOOD

QDPA will:

- ensure that all food cooked at the preschool is cooked through and reaches 75 OC
- ensure that cooked food is served promptly, or
- use a thermometer to ensure that hot food is maintained at above 60OC until ready to serve.
- Not reheat any child's food that has been brought in lunchboxes as it cannot be guaranteed this food has remained in the safe zone or has not previously been reheated.
- ensure that prepared cold food is stored in the refrigerator maintained at below 5 OC 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 to a temperature of 70 OC (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.
- ensure foods are defrosted in the fridge or microwave.



- 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 (note that it doesn't matter which colour you use for which food, provided signs are displayed to alert all staff). 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 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).
- ensure all educators and staff are aware of children and staff who have severe allergic reactions to certain foods as per ASCIA Action Plans
- ensure that unwell staff do not handle food.
- ensure left-over food is stored immediately in the fridge or thrown away.

PREPARING FORMULA

Before preparing formula

- Ensure your hands and the work bench are clean
- Boil water and leave to cool for approximately 30 minutes. This will ensure that the water is not too hot (70°C is the best temperature to prepare formula as it will dissolve easily).

When preparing formula always closely follow the instructions on the tin. In general:

- always wash hands thoroughly prior to preparing formula



- do not compact the formula powder in the scoop, and always ensure the correct ratio of formula to water as specified on the tin: Too little formula powder may leave the infant hungry, whilst too much can cause constipation
- always use a sterilised knife to level the top of the scoop when measuring the formula powder
- without touching the teat shake the bottle well to mix the contents
- cool the made-up formula as quickly as possible: If using immediately run under cold tap water or place in a large bowl of cold water (with the lid on to avoid contaminating the teat)
- if not using immediately made-up formula should be cooled and stored in the fridge.

Warming bottles

- Warm bottles once only
- Do not allow a bottle to cool and then reheat as this can allow germs to grow
- Stand the bottle in an approved bottle warmer to warm safely
- Before feeding the child, check the temperature of the milk by letting a small drop fall on the inside of your wrist- it should feel warm or even a little cool
- Do not warm breast milk or formula in a microwave
- Do not refreeze thawed breast milk
- Discard any milk that has not been used

STORING BREASTMILK AND FORMULA

For safe storage of formula and breast milk, refrigerators must be kept at 5°C or below and should have a nonmercury thermometer to monitor the temperature.

- Formula or breast milk must be kept refrigerated or frozen if not being immediately consumed
- Whenever possible, make up formula as it is needed. Formula should not be refrigerated for more than 24 hours
- Where possible, store freshly made formula at the back of the refrigerator
- Any remaining formula should be thrown out if a child does not finish a bottle: It should not be frozen or reheated
- Prior to placing bottle in the fridge staff will check that it/they are labelled with the child's name and the date the bottle was prepared.



FROZEN BREASTMILK CAN BE THAWED:

1. In the refrigerator and used within 24 hours, or;
2. Standing the bottle in an approved bottle warmer to warm safely

Source: *6th Edition Staying Healthy Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (2024)*.

CLEANING:

QDPA will:

- 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, or disposed of if no longer high quality.
- ensure the food storage area is clean, ventilated, dry, pest free, and not in direct sunlight.
- ensure refrigerators and freezers are cleaned regularly in accordance with the service cleaning checklists, 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.
- record cleaning and sanitising of food contact surfaces.

PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS:

QDPA will ensure:

- a suitably trained and qualified Food Safety Supervisor is appointed at each preschool to oversee the food preparation and compliance with food safety procedures
- clean clothing is worn by food handlers (such as an apron or appropriate jacket)
- long hair is tied back.
- hand and wrist jewellery are not worn while preparing food (e.g., rings and bracelets)
- nails are kept short and clean, and if wearing nail polish, gloves will be worn to avoid nail polish chipping into food



- 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.
- staff who are not well will not prepare or handle food.

All staff handling food will:

- ensure the Food Safety Supervisor and all staff and food handlers attend basic safe food handling training, including an appropriate Food Safety and Food Hygiene Certificate
- undertake regular professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge about early childhood nutrition and food safety practices.
- ensure children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water, and single use disposable 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 5OC or above 60OC), 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.

COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES:

QDPA will:

- provide a copy of the Food Safety Policy to all families upon orientation at the Preschool.
- 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.



Families will:

- Adhere to food safety procedures outlines by the preschool. For example, families will place their child's lunchboxes/cold items in the designated refrigerators to ensure food is kept at the correct temperature.
- Not bring food in that has already been pre-heated, as it cannot be guaranteed this food has always maintained the correct temperature throughout the day prior to consumption.
- Staff are unable to reheat or warm up the food for children that has been brought in their lunchboxes, so families will ensure all the food provided is safe to consume with this in mind.
- Label bottles containing breast milk with the date of preparation or date of expression
- Supply breast milk and/or formula in clearly labelled, multiple small quantities to prevent wastage
- Be mindful of choking hazardous foods in relation to their child's developmental stage
- Engage in positive, open, and transparent communication with educators around food safety. QDPA is here to support you.

SOURCE

Australian Breastfeeding Association www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2021). Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements Policy Guidelines.

Australian Government Department of Education. Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022

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<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood. Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2023).

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Food Standards Australia New Zealand. (2016). Safe Food Australia – A guide to the food safety standard (3rd Ed.):

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National Health and Medical Research Council. (2024). Staying Healthy: preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (6th Ed.). NHMRC. Canberra.

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017). (Updated 2023).

National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013): <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-dietary-guidelines>

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https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf

National Health and Medical Research Council. Eat for health: <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/>

NSW Food Authority: <http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/>

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Food and Health Service Executive. (2013). How to prepare your baby's bottle.

The Australian Dental Association: <https://www.ada.org.au/Home>

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.



REVIEW

Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1.0	2016	QDPA	Original document
2.0	2017	QDPA	Scheduled review
3.0	August 21	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Document reviewed with change in leadership team in 2021. Additional related regulations & NQS references added.Version control and description box added to clarify reviewed items/new inclusions.Format change to include policy statement, purpose, scope and implementation, addition of footers and page numbering and general layout changes
4.0	April 2023	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Changed policy name from Food and Nutrition Policypolicy maintenance - no major changes to policyhyperlinks checked and repaired as required.Policy reviewed and included suggested guidelines from ACECQA Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements Policy Guidelines (August 2021)Additional sections added for AP, Management, NS and Educator and food handlers.inclusion of cultural or religious dietary practices
5.0	March 2024	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Split Nutrition and Food Safety Policy into “Nutrition and Mealtimes Policy” and “Food Safety Policy”Added no reheating of foods (or thermoses) to ensure foods are at a safe temperature all day.Added cold food/lunchboxes to be stored in fridges.Included a “families will” section.Updated references.
6.0	March 2025	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Added bottle preparation and safety proceduresAdded choking awareness for familiesAdded requirements for food safety supervisorUpdated sources
7.0	December 2025	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Removed exclusion of use of thermos (parents to comply with food safety requirements as per policy)Added bottle warmer as an appropriate and safe way to heat bottlesRemoved references to ‘infants’Additional information added re: management of food allergensUpdated food safety requirements