

BALLARAT YMCA CHILDREN'S SERVICES

FOOD SAFETY POLICY

Best Practice – Quality Area 2

05/02/2015

PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- effective food safety practices at Ballarat YMCA Children's Services (YMCA) that comply with legislative requirements and meet best practice standards
- minimising the risk to children of scalds and burns from hot drinks.

This policy should be read in conjunction with *Nutrition and Active Play Policy*.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. VALUES

YMCA is committed to:

- ensuring the safety of all children and adults attending the service
- taking all reasonable precautions to reduce potential hazards and harm to children attending the service
- ensuring adequate health and hygiene procedures are implemented at the service, including safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and serving food
- promoting safe practices in relation to the handling of hot drinks at the service
- educating all service users in the prevention of scalds and burns that can result from handling hot drinks
- complying with all relevant legislation and standards, including the *Food Act 1984* and the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.

2. BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION

Background

Food safety is very important in early childhood service environments. Young children are often more susceptible to the effects of foodborne illness than other members of the community. Foodborne illness (including gastrointestinal illness) can be caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses, chemicals or foreign objects that are present in food. Food provided by a children's service:

- must be fit for human consumption
- must not be adulterated or contaminated
- must not have deteriorated or perished.

Safe food practices can also assist in reducing the risk of a severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) by preventing cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy* and *Asthma Policy*).

Organisations that provide food to children have a duty of care (refer to *Definitions*) to protect children from all hazards and harm. Employers are also required, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, to provide a healthy and safe working environment for employees and contractors, and to ensure that other individuals, including children, parents/guardians, visitors and the general public, are not endangered when attending the workplace. In addition, employees, visitors and contractors are responsible for complying with appropriate workplace standards and procedures that have been implemented to protect their own health and safety, and that of others.

The *Food Act 1984* aims to reduce the incidence of foodborne illness by ensuring that food manufactured, transported, sold, prepared and stored is safe, unadulterated, fit for human consumption and will not cause food poisoning. Under the Act, local councils in Victoria are required to classify every food premises in their municipality according to its food safety risk.

Sessional services supplying low risk snacks such as cut fruit, milk, bread and cereals are classified as Class 4 (low risk). Class 4 services are **not** required to have:

- a food safety program
- a food safety supervisor
- an annual council inspection.

However, Class 4 services must ensure that staff members have the skills and knowledge needed to safely handle food in their work roles. Council may also, at its discretion, inspect a premises under the *Food Act 1984* (e.g. to investigate complaints or conduct a spot check). Individual councils may also require services to complete a food safety audit or plan, especially when the service is operating a special event such as a sausage sizzle.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167*
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulation 77*
- *Food Act 1984* (Vic), as amended 2012
- *National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety*
 - Standard 2.1: Each child's health is promoted
 - Element 2.1.1: Each child's health needs are supported
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (effective as of 1 January 2010 – replaces the *Health Act 1958*)

3. DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy.

Department of Health: The State Government department responsible for the health and wellbeing of Victorians, and with oversight of the administration of the *Food Act 1984*.

Duty of care: A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

Food allergies: Some foods and food ingredients, or their components, can cause severe allergic reactions including anaphylaxis (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy*). Less common symptoms of food allergy include infantile colic, reflux of stomach contents, eczema, chronic diarrhoea and failure to thrive in infants. Food allergies are often caused by peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, sesame seeds, fish and shellfish, soy and wheat. For more information on food allergies, visit www.allergyfacts.org.au

Food safety: (In relation to this policy) ensuring food provided by the service is fit for human consumption.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ): A bi-national Government agency with the responsibility to develop and administer the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code* (the Code), which details standards and requirements in areas such as food additives, food safety, labelling and

genetically modified (GM) foods. Enforcement and interpretation of the Code is the responsibility of State/Territory departments and food agencies within Australia and New Zealand.

Hazardous food: Food containing dangerous biological, chemical or physical agents, or food in a condition that has the potential to cause adverse health effects in humans.

High-risk foods: Bacteria that has the potential to cause food-poisoning can grow and multiply on some foods more easily than others. High-risk foods include meat, seafood, poultry, eggs, dairy products, small goods, cooked rice/pasta and prepared salads (such as coleslaw, pasta salads, rice salads and fruit salads). Food that is contained in packages, cans or jars can become high-risk once opened, and should be handled and stored appropriately.

Hot drink: Any container holding a liquid that has been heated or boiled, and that remains above room temperature (25°C) for any period of time.

Scalds: Burns by hot fluids, steam and other hot vapours.

PROCEDURES

YMCA is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Nominated Supervisor and all staff are provided with a copy of this policy and are kept up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policies, information and resources relating to food safety
- ensuring that this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other service events
- informing DET, DHS and parents/guardians if an outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning occurs at the service

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for:

- ensuring that staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 77(1))
- displaying hygiene guidelines/posters and food safety guidelines/posters in the food areas of the service for the reference of staff and families involved in the preparation and distribution of food to children (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and *Hygiene Policy*)
- monitoring staff compliance with food safety practices (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe)
- ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained at the service (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and *Hygiene Policy*)
- providing parents/guardians with a copy of this policy, and with up-to-date information on the safe provision of food for their children (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Food safety at home and in the community)
- ensuring staff, parents/guardians and others attending the service are aware of the acceptable and responsible practices for the consumption of hot drinks (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service).
- ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to *Anaphylaxis Policy* and *Asthma Policy*)
- ensuring that all facilities and equipment for food preparation and storage are clean, and in good repair and working order
- removing pests and vermin from the premises

- ensuring that staff and volunteers at the service implement adequate health and hygiene practices, and safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service (Regulation 77(2))
- ensuring parents/guardians provide details of their child's specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) on the enrolment form, and discussing these prior to the child commencing at the service and whenever these requirements change
- keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety
- ensuring this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other service events
- ensuring students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the service are informed of this policy.

Certified Supervisors, educators and other staff are responsible for:

- keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety
- being aware of safe food practices and good hygiene practices (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and *Hygiene Policy*), and undergoing training if required
- informing students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the service about this policy
- ensuring that children's lunchboxes are kept indoors, away from heat sources (including direct sunlight)
- discussing food safety with children to increase awareness and assist in developing safe practices
- discouraging children from sharing drink bottles or cups at the service
- ensuring that children do not share lunches to minimise risks in relation to children with food allergies
- providing adequate supervision of children while they are eating
- teaching children to wash and dry their hands
 - before touching or eating food
 - after touching chicken or raw meat
 - after using the toilet
 - after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
 - after playing with an animal/pet
- seeking input from parents/guardians on cultural values or religious expectations regarding food handling, provision and consumption
- informing the Nominated Supervisor or YMCA of any outbreaks of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning at the service
- removing hazardous food (refer to *Definitions*), including food that has fallen on the floor, and providing alternative food items
- maintaining good personal and kitchen hygiene (refer to *Sources*: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe)
- covering all wounds/cuts on hands or arms with wound strips or bandages
- wearing disposable gloves when handling food
- complying with the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service)
- informing parents/guardians and visitors to the service about the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the service (refer to Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service).

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- washing hands prior to participating in food preparation and cooking activities

- ensuring that food preparation surfaces, utensils, lunchboxes and reusable drink bottles are clean
- washing all fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- wearing disposable gloves when handling food
- packing a cold item, such as a frozen water bottle, with perishable foods in a child's lunchbox, or using an insulated lunchbox or cooler
- complying with the requirements of this policy
- providing details of specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Nominated Supervisor prior to the child commencing at the service and whenever these requirements change.

Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service

AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the YMCA on 5/2/2015.

ATTACHMENT 1

Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the service

Services should adapt this attachment and its procedures to suit their specific circumstances.

Scalds and burns from hot liquids are a common cause of hospital admission in 0 to 4 year olds. A child's skin is thinner and more sensitive than an adult's and will therefore experience a more severe burn (refer to *Sources: Kidsafe fact sheet*). Children's natural curiosity, impulsiveness, mode of reaction and lack of experience in assessing danger are contributing factors to the vulnerability of children at this age.

Common scenarios that can lead to a child being scalded include when a child pulls a cup of tea, coffee or hot water from a table or bench, or when a child runs into a person holding a hot drink resulting in the hot drink spilling over the child's body.

The consumption of lukewarm drinks or the use of lidded cups/mugs in areas accessed by children should be considered with caution, as this is not necessarily a safe practice and might give the impression that it is acceptable to consume hot drinks around children.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The Nominated Supervisor and all staff are responsible for:

- ensuring that hot drinks are only prepared in areas inaccessible to children, such as the kitchen, staffroom and office, and that only thermal and lidded drinking cups or mugs are used during the time that children are in attendance.
- ensuring that extreme caution is taken in consuming hot drinks during the time that children are in attendance. Hot drinks must not be carried around the room, or outside but must be situated in an area that children cannot access and adults must move to that area to consume them.
- informing parents/guardians on duty, visitors to the service, students, volunteers and any other person participating in the program of the service's hot drink procedures and the reasons for such procedures
- ensuring that children enrolled and participating in the program do not have access to areas of the building that are likely to be hazardous, including the kitchen, staffroom and office
- ensuring that parents/guardians attending the service actively supervise children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, including siblings
- ensuring that at least one educator with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance and immediately available at all times that children are being educated and cared for by the service
- implementing safety procedures in relation to hot drinks at service events occurring outside operational hours, including:
 - offering alternative drinks for adults e.g. juice, water or iced coffee
 - safely locating urns, kettles and power cords out of reach of children
 - preparing and consuming hot drinks in an area inaccessible to children
 - ensuring a person with current approved first aid qualifications is in attendance for social events held outside operational hours.