



Modbury North Kindergarten

Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary requirements policy

National Quality Standard Area 2 | Children's health and safety

Children have the right to experience quality education and care in an environment that safeguards and promotes their health, safety, and wellbeing.

Purpose

Under the [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\) - NSW Legislation](#), all early childhood education and care services must have policies and procedures in place in relation to nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements.

A strong sense of health and wellbeing lays the foundational framework for a child's confidence, energy and optimism, directly contributing to their ability to concentrate, cooperate and thrive. The purpose of this policy is to outline our holistic commitment to safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and wellbeing of every child in our care.

By embedding healthy lifestyle choices into our everyday routines and curriculum, we ensure that all nutrition, food and drink requirements are met to promote physical growth, sustained energy, and optimal learning outcomes. Educators actively role-model food safety, hygiene and healthy choices, empowering children with knowledge and skill to make positive lifestyle decisions. We also encourage and promote environmentally responsible and sustainable practices, working with families to minimise waste and packaging in the food and drink brought to kindergarten.

Central to this policy is to create an inclusive, supportive food and drink environment built in partnership with our families and the border community. We acknowledge, respect and celebrate the diverse cultural, religious, and community dietary requirement of all our families, allowing children to safely express their heritage through their meals they bring. We recognise that every child is unique, and we closely consider the profound impacts of individual development, health and medical condition on a child's nutrition and dietary requirements, working collaboratively with parents to manage the needs safely and sensitively.

(Reference: [ACECQA Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary guidelines policy guidelines](#))

Policy principles

The principles we apply to our decisions and practices about nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements include:

- We prioritise children's health, safety and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food as well as providing a safe and positive environment for consuming food and drink brought from home.
- We promote a healthy lifestyle, including healthy eating and physical activity appropriate for each child.
- We value and respect each family's culture, customs and religious traditions, and support children's dietary requirements, food and drink restrictions and food preferences.
- We support children to develop a strong sense of wellbeing and self-determination in how they view and consume food and drink as a core step of learning to self-manage their personal wellbeing.

Nutrition, food and drink practices and strategies

At our kindergarten, we believe that mealtime is more than just an opportunity for nutrition. It is a vital space for learning, connection and celebrating our diverse community. We aim to foster a relaxed, inclusive, and positive environment where children can build a healthy relationship with food. By integrating meaningful food experiences into our daily curriculum, we help children listen to their bodies respect individual differences and develop practical lifestyle skills.

Promote a positive eating and food learning environment

We will:

- Role model and promote positive eating practices, including foods consistent with the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) at mealtimes.
- Support individual children's health, development and growth, including taking into consideration the impacts of medical conditions and disability on children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary needs.
- Encourage parents and caregivers to supply nutritious foods that align with South Australia's *Right Bite* strategy.
 - Parents are encouraged to follow the Right Bite strategy guidelines to prepare children's food and drink choices and speak with staff if they have any issues
 - We highly encourage wholesome lunchbox options such as sandwiches, wraps, sushi, rice crackers, fresh fruit, yoghurt, cheese, and vegetables.
 - To support consistent healthy habits, we gently discourage families from regularly sending processed, high-sugar, or high-fat foods, such as chocolate, muesli bars, roll-ups, lollies, chocolate chip biscuits, sweet buns, muffins, cakes, chips, or crisps
- Support children and families' specific cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements.
 - We warmly invite our multicultural families to pack lunchboxes featuring the healthy staple foods enjoyed at home—such as roti, curry, rice, daal, pulav, biryani (nut-free), paratha, idli, dosa, uttapam, or dhokla.
- Ensure children have access to drinking water at all times. Educators incorporate routine reminders during transition times, outdoor play, and mealtimes to encourage regular drinking.
- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements.
 - We maintain a small stock of emergency snacks—such as crackers, biscuits, sultanas, or sandwiches on a needs basis to supplement lunchboxes.
 - If ongoing feeding issues or patterns arise, educators will thoughtfully call and collaborate with families to find a supportive solution
- Provide opportunities for children to experience a range of food and to learn about healthy food choices from educators and other children, such as through tasting, touching, smelling, cooking, healthy lifestyle play-based learning and cultural experiences.
 - Through our "Eat the Rainbow" program, children are encouraged explore different coloured fruits and vegetables while learning how a colourful diet helps their bodies grow
- Include opportunities for children to develop practical food skills like preparing and cooking healthy food

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- Be integrating into our program and consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standard
- Encourage chewing to promote oral muscle development
- Not use food to reward or to address behaviours of concern.
- Use mealtimes and routines to engage in conversations with children about their food, and to help them to recognise when they are hungry or full.
- Create a relaxed eating environment where children have sufficient time to enjoy their food and social interaction with others.
- Continue to develop a community garden, providing a shared space where families and children can plant, grow, harvest, and share fresh food together

Communicate positive and culturally responsive food practices with families

We will:

- Consult with families about individual children's developmental needs, dietary requirements and dietary restrictions (including, health and medical needs, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and developmental, cultural and religious food restrictions). This information will be included in the children's enrolment records.
- Support the development of inclusive health support planning to meet children's nutrition, food, drink and dietary requirements and eating environment through implementing the department's [Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings](#)
- Inform and support families to understand that children's voice and agency is a part of the educational program, including mealtimes and other food and drink related experiences
- Consult with families about their cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements to support individual children's needs and all children's cultural understandings.
- Provide information to families on the types of food and drinks recommended for children's lunchboxes. By using the department [Packing the lunch box](#) resource or [Right Bite Food and Drink Supply Standard](#) to provide relevant information.
- Communicate relevant, informative and evidence-based nutrition, food and drink information to families in your newsletters, discussions, during orientation or by hosting information sessions
- Inform families of the preschools' risk minimisation strategies to support children with anaphylaxis, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and restrictions.

Allergy Awareness and Risk Minimisation

Note: If your child has a food allergy, please let staff know when enrolling your child.

In accordance with the Department for Education's *Anaphylaxis and Allergies Procedure*, our site operates as a "Nut Aware" service. Blanket bans on specific foods (e.g., "nut-free") are not recommended, as it is impossible to guarantee the complete removal of all allergens from an education and care environment. Instead, our site focuses on strict risk-minimisation strategies to create a highly allergy-aware environment.

At times, children are enrolled who experience severe, life-threatening anaphylactic reactions to specific foods – most commonly nuts, eggs, and egg products. Because contact with these ingredients can have

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serious or fatal consequences, families are strongly requested to provide lunchbox food that do not contain these items.

- Packaged products stating they “may contain traces of nuts” are generally acceptable at the site. However, if a child with a specific, life-threatening allergy to trace amounts is enrolled, a dedicated notice will be sent out to families outlining more stringent requirements.

We will:

- Encourage families avoid sending certain foods in lunchboxes
- Not use any food identified as high-risk allergens for currently enrolled children in any cooking activities, sensory play, or experiments.
- Ensure all staff comply with the department’s Anaphylaxis and allergies procedure including promoting an allergy-aware environment and developing and implementing risk minimisation strategies.
- Never isolate children with allergies from their peers during mealtime. Safety is maintained through active supervision, strict “no food sharing” rules, regular handwashing before and after eating, and thorough cleaning of all surfaces after each snack and lunch times.
- Individual risk minimisation strategies are documented in individual child’s Safety and Risky Management Plan.
- Display a visual poster for families stating: “*A child with a known anaphylactic reaction to nuts and nut products attends this preschool.*” If a child brings nut products to the site, families will be gently reminded of our guidelines in person, via SMS, email, or through newsletter.

Provide hygienic and safe food practices

At our kindergarten, we partner with families to ensure all children enjoy a safe and nutritious day. While families are required to provide healthy food for their child, we ask that you clearly label all lunchboxes, containers, and drink bottles with your child’s name to prevent mix-ups. Please note that our centre does not regularly supply food. However, we keep a small stock of emergency snacks—such as crackers, biscuits, sultanas, or sandwiches—to ensure no child goes hungry. We strictly monitor these items, checking them regularly to guarantee they are fresh and discarding any that have expired.

To maintain a hygienic and safe food environment, we commit to:

- Ensure children and staff implement safe hygiene and hand washing practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and eating food.
 - Children and educators must wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water before handling food, eating, and after using the bathroom or changing nappies.
 - Educators teach children proper, hygienic handwashing procedures at the start of each school term and place visual reminder cards at all handwashing stations.
 - Educators sanitise all surfaces, including tables and sitting mats, before and after every use.
 - To prevent cross-contamination, staff use a dedicated food handling sink to clean cutting boards and utensils, keeping them entirely separate from art supplies.
 - Educators are encouraged to participate in food handling training courses to maintain their own food safety knowledge
- Actively supervise children at all times when they are eating and drinking, ensure they are seated and provide adequate time to eat and drink, to minimise risk of choking. Choking hazards (food

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types and sizes) will be considered when preparing, cooking or sharing foods with children, appropriate to age and ability.

- Ensure food is stored within food safe limits.
 - Our site has a dedicated refrigerator to store children's food and we encourage children to place their lunchboxes inside as soon as they arrive.
 - Because our limited facilities cannot meet the National Standards for reheating food safely, our site is unable to reheat children's lunches. If you would like your child to have a warm meal, we encourage you to pack it already heated in a thermos or an insulated food container. These can be placed on the table next to the fridge.
- Role model and engage children in conversations about hygienic and safe food practices. This will include encouraging children to use their own utensils, encouraging sitting and discouraging children from sharing or handling other children's food and utensils.

Create an inclusive and family-friendly environment

We recognise that food is central to culture, family identity, and community connection. Our site is dedicated to creating a warm, inclusive, and collaborative environment where every family feels supported and every child's dietary identity is respected.

We will:

- Provide a supportive environment for families to feed their babies and young children, including comfortable seating and accessible facilities to heat bottles.
- Actively collaborate with families to ensure their cultural, religious, and philosophical food choices are respected and reflected within our curriculum.
- Work hand in hand with parents/carers and healthcare professionals to establish individualised risk-minimisation and medical management plans for children with specific medical or dietary requirements such as anaphylaxis, celiac disease, or diabetes). Our educators are fully trained to manage these needs safely, sensitively, and discreetly, ensuring no child feels excluded due to a medical condition.
- Maintain an open-door policy where families can comfortably seek guidance or share concerns regarding their child's eating habits. If a child brings food that does not align with our site's nutrition guidelines, educators will gently encourage the child to prioritise their healthy options first, saving "sometimes" food for home. Under no circumstances will a child's food be shamed or discarded.
- Connect our community with trusted local South Australian nutrition resources, such as *Wellbeing SA* guides, the *Cancer Council's Healthy Lunchbox Builder*, and South Australia's *Right Bite Standards*. Practical tips and ideas are regularly shared through our newsletters and family notice board to support families in packing nutritious, cost-effective lunches.

Promote environmentally responsible practices

We will:

- Promote environmentally responsible and sustainable food and drink practices for food and drink bought to our kindergarten, by utilising onsite composting and recycling systems, while actively discouraging single-use plastic waste and excessive packaging.

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- Encourage families provide a clearly labelled, refillable water bottle for their child each day, and the site ensures that fresh, clean water is always readily available for children to refill their bottles throughout the day. Drink bottles are stored on a dedicated trolley that travels with the children between indoor and outdoor spaces.
- Encourage engagement and opportunities to extend children's understanding about nature and the environment and how food is grown, hunted, gathered, processed and prepared. This includes tending the garden, cultivating seasonal vegetables, harvesting seeds, and caring for local birds, insects, and mini-beasts within our site ecosystem.
- plant and care of native plants and herbs used in cooking and learning experiences.

Special occasions and birthday guidelines

To support our food and nutrition curriculum, and to ensure the safety and inclusion of children with allergies and specific dietary requirements, our site maintains a cake and treat-free celebration policy. In response to our community's feedback, this policy provides a healthy alternative that allows families who wish to contribute to the celebration to do so, making participation entirely optional.

Please observe the following guidelines for birthday celebrations:

- **Whole Fruit Sharing:** We invite families wishing to celebrate their child's birthday to bring in whole fruit to share with the group instead of cakes, cupcakes, or other sweet treats. Suitable options include watermelon, apples, rockmelon, dragon fruit, or any other seasonal favourites.
- **Preparation and Food Safety:** To maintain hygiene and food safety policy and standards, please bring the fruit in whole. Our educators will assist the children by washing, cutting, and preparing the fruit on-site to share.
- **Confirming Numbers:** Participation in fruit sharing is completely optional. If you choose to participate, please check with your child's educators beforehand to confirm the exact number of children present so there is enough for everyone to enjoy.

Please rest assured that every child's special day is acknowledged and celebrated at our preschool. Regardless of whether fruit is brought in to share, educators will ensure your child feels special.

Roles and responsibilities

Preschool director or principal

Lead the development and implementation of this policy in consultation with families and educators and ensure it reflects your preschool community and that it is accessible and communicated to all families and educators.

Ensure compliance with the department's related policies and procedures including:

- [Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)
- [First aid procedure](#)

- [Health support planning for children and students in education and care settings](#)

Respond to instances of variations in practices to this policy on a case-by-case, ensuring each child's developmental and cultural needs are supported and families' decisions and food choices are respected.

Support educators to access professional development opportunities to broaden their understanding of children's nutrition, eating behaviours and creating positive and safe eating environments and learning.

Educators

Role model food safety practices, healthy eating and drinking practices and support families understanding of the preschool's approach to nutrition and healthy eating.

Work with other educators, families, and health professionals to implement action plans to support children with specific dietary, eating and drinking requirements, including children with developmental, health and medical conditions.

Raise any issues or concerns regarding implementation of this policy with the preschool director or principal.

Families

Provide information to the preschool director or principal about their child's dietary requirements and health support needs, together with the appropriate and current documentation, equipment and medication.

Support implementation of the preschool's policy.

Seek information and support from our educators about the preschool's nutrition and food practices and raise any concerns with educators or the preschool director or principal.

Governing council

Endorse this policy.

Supporting information

Provide links to other related policies and information. You can use links from the [Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool](#) EDi page

Approvals

Status: Approved

Policy approved by: Freda Lam | Director, Modbury North Kindergarten

Policy approved by: Government Council, Modbury North Kindergarten

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