



ACT
Government

Education

ACT Public Preschool – Meal times, Nutrition, Dietary Requirements, Food Handling and Storage

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This procedure builds upon a foundation for Nutrition with ACT Public Schools set out by the ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy.

1. Overview

- 1.1. This procedure identifies expectations surrounding strategies to promote safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food.
- 1.2. It also outlines the promotion of nutritious food or beverages that meet children's individual needs for growth, development, cultural, religious and health requirements.

2. Rationale

- 2.1. The [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#) outlines requirements for services surrounding safe food practices and expectations for food and beverages that support the health and wellbeing of all children. These requirements are further supported within Quality Area 2 of the [Guide to the National Quality Standard](#).

3. Meal times, Nutrition and Dietary Requirements

- 3.1. Members of the preschool community are encouraged to use meal times as an opportunity to support social learning; and model appropriate meal time behaviours and attitudes.
- 3.2. Meal times provide an opportunity for communities or small groups to come together and engage.
- 3.3. Members of the preschool community are expected to model nutritious food and drink choices when eating on school sites.
- 3.4. Members of the preschool community will acknowledge and encourage positive discussions surrounding healthy food and drinks within the context of play, meal times and learning.
- 3.5. All educators are expected to supervise and support children during meal times, with the view to supporting individual dietary requirements and independence.
- 3.6. Families are encouraged to provide healthy and nutritious food for their children when in attendance at preschool. Familiar foods that are reflective of family, cultural and religious beliefs are encouraged.
- 3.7. The nominated supervisor will share information with parents and guardians surrounding healthy, nutritious lunch box options. This may include: the provision of brochures; visuals; information within the preschool handbook; or during parent information sessions.
- 3.8. The nominated supervisor and all preschool staff will communicate any foods that are prevented from consumption when attending preschool. For example, a *No Nut Policy*.
- 3.9. Signage will inform visitors of any foods that are not to be consumed within the preschool environment.
- 3.10. It is the responsibility of all members of the preschool community to maintain an *allergy aware* environment.

- 3.11. It is the responsibility of parents and carers to communicate information surrounding allergies or food intolerances; and ensure packed lunches do not contain allergens that may result in a reaction.
- 3.12. The preschool community is encouraged to incorporate intentional and spontaneous teaching surrounding food and nutrition. This may include: engagement in the *Fresh Tastes* program; participation in cooking experiences; and planting, harvesting and cooking vegetables.

4. Access to fresh drinking water

- 4.1. Children must be provided with access to fresh drinking water while at preschool.
- 4.2. Families are encouraging to provide fresh water in a drink bottle each day and children will be encouraged to refill these as required throughout the day.
- 4.3. All educators will encourage children to independently consume water throughout each preschool day.

5. Food handling and storage

- 5.1. A space must be provided for children to store their food that in a space that is not affected by heat or direct sunlight.
- 5.2. Effective handwashing procedures must be followed prior to eating or handling food.
- 5.3. Adults who handle food for consumption must ensure effective handwashing procedures have been followed and wear gloves.
- 5.4. Re-heating of food using a microwave is not encouraged. Families are encouraged to use child friendly thermoses if warm food is desired.
- 5.5. All educators are encouraged to communicate information surrounding child friendly lunch box containers that promote independence and sustainability.

6. Contact

- 6.1. The Director, School Improvement is responsible for this procedure.
- 6.2. For support contact The School Operations Branch on 6205 3313 or email SchoolOperations@act.gov.au

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1. The procedure owner will be responsible for monitoring the procedure through annual scans. A full review will occur as necessary, or within a three-year period.

8. Complaints

- 8.1. Any concerns about the application of this procedure or the procedure itself, should be raised with:
 - the school principal in the first instance.
 - the Directorate on (02) 6205 5429 or through the [online form](#).
 - ACT Education's Regulatory Authority, *Children's Education and Care Assurance* on [\(02\) 6207 7581](#) or complaintsCECA@act.gov.au.
- 8.2. For more information also refer to the [Complaints Policy](#) on the Directorate's website.

9. References

- 9.1. [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- 9.2. *Fresh Tastes* www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/food-and-drink-guidelines/fresh-tastes-factsheet
- 9.3. Guide to the National Quality Standard
- 9.4. *Nutrition Australia* ACT website: <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/act>

10. Related Policies and Implementation Documents:

- ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy
- ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy Guidelines
- The National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines
- *ACT Government Healthy Living* fact sheets
- The Australian Dietary Guidelines