



# Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements

Policy Title	Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements
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## Policy Statement

SHARE OOSH promotes children's health and wellbeing by providing safe, nutritious food and beverages and supporting families in their role as primary decision-makers about their child's nutrition. We are committed to respectful mealtimes, safe food handling, and inclusive practices that recognise each child's cultural, medical and personal dietary needs.

Our approach upholds children's dignity, supports positive lifelong eating habits, and ensures that all food-related practices at SHARE comply with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations, the National Quality Standard, and relevant food safety legislation.

# Definitions

<b>Allergy</b>	An immune system reaction to a food or substance that can cause symptoms ranging from mild to life-threatening.
<b>Anaphylaxis</b>	A severe, rapid allergic reaction that is life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention.
<b>Dietary Requirements</b>	Specific needs relating to the foods a child can or cannot eat due to allergies, intolerances, medical conditions, cultural or religious practices, or family preferences.
<b>Food Safety Supervisor (FSS)</b>	A person with accredited food safety training who is appointed to oversee safe food handling and compliance with food safety requirements.
<b>Intolerance</b>	A non-immune reaction to a food or substance that can cause discomfort or illness but is not life-threatening.
<b>Nut-Free</b>	A service decision to prohibit foods containing nuts, or foods with visible nut ingredients, to reduce risk to children with nut allergies.
<b>Risk Minimisation Plan</b>	A plan that outlines strategies to reduce risk for a child with a health or medical condition, including those related to food allergies or anaphylaxis.
<b>Safe Drinking Water</b>	Water that is clean, hygienic and accessible to children at all times, as required under the National Regulations.
<b>Service-Provided Food</b>	Food and beverages supplied by the service, including breakfast, afternoon tea, fruit snacks and meals provided during vacation care or special events.
<b>Special Diet</b>	A diet that differs from general menu items due to medical, cultural, religious or ethical reasons, or family preference.

## NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.1	Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.

2.1.3	Healthy lifestyle	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
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### QUALITY AREA 3: PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.1.2	Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

### QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.
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### QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

5.1.1	Positive educator-to-child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
5.2.1	Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.

### QUALITY AREA 6: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.2.1	Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.

## QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

7.1.2	Management systems	Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
7.2.1	Continuous improvement	There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

## Legislative And Regulatory References

### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW

56	Service to have policies and procedures
165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

### EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS

77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
79	Service providing food and beverages
80	Weekly menu
90	Medical conditions policy
91	Medical conditions policy to be provided to parents
160	Child enrolment records
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

- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Administration of First Aid
- Behaviour Guidance
- Child Safe
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Providing a Child Safe Environment

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out how SHARE OOSH plans, provides and manages food, beverages and dietary requirements so that children's health, safety and wellbeing are promoted at all times. It explains how the service will:

- Provide children with regular access to safe drinking water and nutritious food that is adequate in quantity and appropriate to their age, development, culture and time spent at the service.
- Complement families' primary role in making decisions about their child's nutrition, while promoting healthy choices consistent with current Australian guidelines for children.
- Identify, document and respond to each child's dietary requirements, including allergies, intolerances, medical conditions, disabilities, cultural, religious and ethical preferences.
- Store, prepare, cook and serve food in ways that minimise the risk of food-borne illness, choking, cross-contamination and exposure to known allergens, including when food is supplied by families or external providers.
- Ensure mealtimes and food-related experiences are safe, supervised, relaxed and respectful, and support children's dignity, autonomy and inclusion.
- Communicate clear expectations to families about food brought from home and how changes to a child's dietary requirements can be shared with the service.

- Clarify the responsibilities of the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Persons, educators, other staff, contractors and families in relation to nutrition, food safety and dietary management at SHARE OOSH.

## Guiding Principles

SHARE OOSH is guided by the following principles when implementing this policy:

- Children's health and safety are paramount** – All food, beverages and mealtime practices prioritise children's wellbeing, minimise risk and meet legislative requirements.
- Families are respected as the primary decision-makers** – We work in partnership with families to understand and honour each child's dietary needs, cultural practices and preferences
- Nutrition supports learning, participation and inclusion** – When places are limited, we act transparently, prioritising children at risk and giving particular consideration to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Mealtimes are positive, social and respectful** – Children are supported to eat at their own pace, exercise autonomy where safe, and experience relaxed, unhurried mealtime environments.
- Food is handled, prepared and served safely** – All staff follow safe food handling and hygiene practices to prevent illness, cross-contamination and exposure to allergens.
- Sustainable practices are embedded where possible** – The service aims to minimise food waste, use resources responsibly and incorporate composting or recycling practices that support environmental stewardship.

## Procedures

### 1. Identifying and Managing Dietary Requirements

- Dietary information is collected at enrolment, including allergies, intolerances, medical conditions, cultural or religious requirements, and family preferences.
- Families may notify the service of changes verbally, by phone, email or via OWNA. Staff record and action updates as soon as practicable.
- Dietary requirements that relate to a medical condition are supported by a current medical management plan and risk minimisation plan, in line with the Medical Conditions policy.
- The Nominated Supervisor ensures up-to-date dietary information is readily accessible to all educators and kitchen staff in a safe, confidential and non-photographic manner.
- Practical tools (e.g. dietary lists or kitchen notes) are maintained and checked daily.
- Educators must confirm dietary needs before serving food to any child.

## 2. Provision of Food and Beverages by the Service

- SHARE provides breakfast, afternoon tea and an evening fruit snack daily, and may provide meals during vacation care or special events.
- All food and beverages provided by the service meet Reg 79 requirements, are nutritious, sufficient in quantity, and appropriate to children's age, development and time spent at the service.
- Safe drinking water is available to children at all times.
- Menus are planned in advance and substitutions are made to meet dietary needs where reasonable and safe.
- Temporary menu changes are communicated to families when practicable.
- Food may be heated by educators using safe procedures.

## 3. Food Provided by Families

- Families may provide food on days where this is required (e.g. lunch during vacation care).
- SHARE is a nut-free service. Foods containing nuts, or items with visible nut ingredients, are not permitted.
- Other known allergens are managed based on current enrolment information, and families may be asked to avoid sending specific foods when a child with a high-risk allergy is enrolled.
- Educators will remove foods that present an immediate safety risk (e.g. allergens, spoiled food, choking hazards for younger children) and provide a safe alternative where possible.
- Staff cannot heat food in glass containers.
- Requests to heat children's food are accommodated where safe.
- Staff must not share their own food with children.
- Food brought in by families for birthdays or celebrations cannot be accepted.

## 4. Safe Food Handling and Hygiene

- All staff involved in food handling follow safe hygiene practices, including handwashing, use of gloves when required, and maintaining clean preparation areas.
- Food is stored, prepared, cooked, heated, cooled and served in ways that minimise the risk of contamination or food-borne illness.
- Cross-contamination and allergen exposure must be prevented at all times, including through separate utensils, surfaces and serving processes where required.

- The service complies with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, including Standard 3.2.2A.
- SHARE maintains an appointed Food Safety Supervisor, and staff who handle food must complete industry-accepted Food Handler training.
- Cleaning and sanitising of kitchen areas and equipment occur daily and as required.

## 5. Supervision at Mealtimes

- Children are actively supervised at all times while eating or drinking.
- Children must be seated when consuming food or beverages to reduce choking risks.
- Food cannot be shared between children.
- Educators check dietary requirements before serving food and monitor children throughout the meal.
- Educators respond promptly to signs of choking, allergic reaction or illness.

## 6. Cooking and Food Experiences

- Cooking and food activities offered to children are age-appropriate, supervised and follow safe food handling practices.
- Children and educators wash hands before and after participating.
- Allergen-safe alternatives are provided where appropriate.
- Food prepared during activities must be safe to consume, and unsafe items are discarded.

## 7. Special Events, Excursions and External Providers

- Dietary requirements are incorporated into planning for excursions, incursions, BBQs and special events.
- Where external food providers are used, the service will seek information about ingredients, allergens and food safety practices.
- Families are informed in advance when the service is providing event food and may request adjustments aligned with their child's documented dietary needs.

## 8. Responding to Incidents

- Educators respond immediately to signs of allergic reaction, choking, food-borne illness or other health concerns.

- First aid is administered as required.
- Incidents are recorded in accordance with the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness policy.
- Serious incidents and illnesses are reported to the Regulatory Authority where required under Reg 176.
- The Nominated Supervisor reviews incidents and near misses and implements improvements where needed.

## 9. Communication With Families

- The weekly menu is displayed for families, as required by Reg 80.
- Families are informed when menu changes occur, when special foods will be offered, or when specific allergens need to be avoided.
- Families are encouraged to raise concerns or provide updated information at any time.
- Changes to dietary requirements are actioned as soon as practicable and communicated to relevant staff.

## Roles and Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBLE FOR
Approved Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures the service has a current Nutrition, Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements policy that complies with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and relevant food safety legislation.</li> <li>• Allocates resources for safe food provision, including suitably qualified staff (for example, a Food Safety Supervisor), appropriate equipment and training.</li> <li>• Approves the overall approach to menu planning, dietary management and food safety systems.</li> <li>• Monitors implementation through reports, incident data and audits, and endorses policy reviews and updates.</li> </ul>
Nominated Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads the implementation of this policy in daily practice.</li> <li>• Ensures dietary information is collected, recorded and kept up to date for each child.</li> <li>• Ensures risk minimisation plans are in place for relevant medical conditions that impact food and eating.</li> <li>• Oversees menu planning and food service so that food and beverages are nutritious, culturally responsive and appropriate to children's ages and time at the service.</li> <li>• Ensures food safety and hygiene procedures are developed, communicated and followed, and that staff have appropriate skills and knowledge.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responds to food-related incidents, complaints or concerns and implements improvements as required.</li> </ul>
Responsible Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensures this policy is followed during their shift.</li> <li>Checks that up-to-date dietary information and allergy alerts are accessible to educators and kitchen staff.</li> <li>Oversees mealtimes to ensure adequate supervision, safe seating, prevention of food sharing and adherence to nut-free and other allergen restrictions.</li> <li>Confirms that food safety and hygiene practices are in place before, during and after food service.</li> <li>Responds promptly to food-related incidents or near misses and informs the Nominated Supervisor.</li> </ul>
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and follow each child's documented dietary requirements before serving any food or beverages.</li> <li>Supervise children closely while they are eating or drinking, ensuring they are seated, do not share food and have access to safe drinking water.</li> <li>Implement safe food handling and hygiene practices, including handwashing, using clean utensils and preventing cross-contamination and allergen exposure.</li> <li>Communicate respectfully with children and families about food, modelling positive attitudes to healthy eating and mealtimes.</li> <li>Record and report any changes to dietary needs, food-related incidents or hazards to the Responsible Person or Nominated Supervisor.</li> <li>Do not give children food they have brought for themselves at work, or food supplied by staff for personal consumption.</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide accurate and complete information about their child's dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances, medical conditions and cultural or religious needs at enrolment and whenever these change.</li> <li>Supply medical management plans, medications and documentation required for dietary-related medical conditions, in line with the Medical Conditions policy.</li> <li>Provide food from home, when requested, that aligns with the service's nut-free status, known allergen restrictions and healthy eating guidance.</li> <li>Communicate promptly with the service about any concerns, upcoming changes or significant events that may affect their child's eating or wellbeing.</li> <li>Respect the service's decision not to accept food for birthdays or celebrations and its responsibility to manage food safety for all children.</li> </ul>
Administrative Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure enrolment and re-enrolment processes capture required health and dietary information for each child and that records are accurate and complete.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enter and update dietary information in the service's management system and promptly alert the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to significant changes.</li> <li>Support communication with families about menus, special food events and requests for updated medical or dietary documentation.</li> <li>Assist with the organisation and filing of food safety, training and incident records related to this policy, as directed by the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.</li> </ul>
Students/Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the directions of supervising educators, Responsible Persons and the Nominated Supervisor in relation to food handling, mealtimes and children's dietary requirements.</li> <li>Model basic hygiene practices such as handwashing and help to maintain a clean and safe eating environment under supervision.</li> <li>Do not provide their own food or drink to children and do not consume allergens in designated children's eating areas.</li> <li>Maintain confidentiality about children's health and dietary information.</li> <li>Promptly report any concerns, hazards or incidents related to food or mealtimes to an educator or Responsible Person.</li> </ul>

## Induction and Ongoing Training

- All new staff, students and volunteers receive an induction that includes this policy, safe food handling expectations, allergy and anaphylaxis awareness, and procedures for accessing children's dietary information.
- Staff involved in food preparation or service complete required food safety training and follow the direction of the appointed Food Safety Supervisor.
- Ongoing training may include updates on menu procedures, allergen management, choking risk prevention and any changes to relevant legislation or service practices.
- Refresher training is provided when needed, including following food-related incidents, changes to dietary requirements or updates to food safety systems.

## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review Process

### Monitoring

- The Nominated Supervisor monitors compliance with this policy through regular observation of food preparation areas, mealtime practices and the management of dietary requirements.
- Responsible Persons conduct routine checks to ensure current dietary information is available and followed each shift.

- Food safety records, training logs and relevant incident reports are reviewed periodically to identify patterns, risks or required adjustments.
- Any non-compliance or concerns identified by staff or families are raised with the Nominated Supervisor for prompt action.

## Evaluation

- Feedback from children, families, staff and audits is considered to improve practice.
- Menu quality, food safety practices and the management of dietary requirements are evaluated to ensure ongoing compliance with the National Law, National Regulations and food safety standards.

## Review

This policy will be formally reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if:

- legislation or regulations change or,
- dietary needs, food safety requirements or following related incidents.

All staff are consulted as part of the review process, and families are invited to contribute feedback.

The Management Committee endorses all updates and ensures staff re-sign to confirm awareness.

Version control is maintained on the policy. Families are informed of significant changes with appropriate notice, and related documents are updated accordingly.