



Athelstone Preschool

# Nutrition, food, drink, and dietary requirements policy and procedure

## Rationale:

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.

As part of our commitment to children's health, safety and wellbeing, we role-model food safety and hygiene practices, as well as supporting healthy food and drink choices according to each child's needs. (Reference: [ACECQA Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary guidelines policy guidelines](#))

Athelstone Preschool promotes nutritional eating habits in a safe and supportive environment. This Policy supports the Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool, and relates to the [Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool](#). And the Department for Education well-being strategy. This policy works in conjunction with our 'Nut Aware Policy' and 'Allergy Aware Procedure'.

**We believe** that early childhood is an important time for establishing life long, healthy eating habits, healthy diet has a positive effect on children's growth, weight, development and learning and can benefit the children in 3 ways:

1. Short term; maximizes growth, development, activity levels and good health.
2. Long term; minimizes the risk of diet related diseases later in life.
3. Good nutrition contributes to good health and well-being and this is vital for positive

engagement in learning activities.

This food policy has been established after consultation with staff and parents within the preschool community.

## 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.

## Nutrition, food and drink practices and strategies

### 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.
- Support children and families' specific cultural, spiritual and religious values and requirements.
- Ensure children have access to drinking water at all times. For example, by having an access to drink bottles available all day, routine reminder at breaks and mealtimes to drink water; offering drinks appropriate to the needs of each child on a regular basis. Checking their water bottles through the day.
- Support sufficient food availability to meet children's dietary requirements. For example by offering breakfast club.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - Our preschool will celebrate days of significance including children's birthdays. For example, we will celebrate children's birthdays by singing the happy birthday song; if birthday items are bought in to share, they may be offered to families at the end of a session. This helps promote our healthy eating message as well as minimising any intolerance or allergy risk.

## 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 families of the preschools' risk minimisation strategies to support children with anaphylaxis, food and drink allergies, food and drink intolerances and restrictions. For example, strategies your preschool implements to create an allergy-aware environment such as, at times the service may ask that some food or drink products are not brought in to the preschool (refer to the department's [Supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)); information will be provided to families about ingredients used during cooking experiences.
- 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. For example, engaging children in decisions about meals and routines, discussing and resolving day to day enactment of the nutrition policy, offering choices of 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. For example using the department [Packing the lunch box](#) resource or alternative resources and links to resources.
- Communicate to families that healthy and safe eating and drinking practices at established mealtimes is a goal the preschool is working towards. This may be communicated regularly or discussed individually as appropriate.
- Communicate relevant, informative and evidence-based nutrition, food and drink information to families in your newsletters, discussions, during orientation or by hosting information sessions.
- Consult with Aboriginal families, education and support workers and invite local community Elders/members to support individual children's cultural needs and all children's cultural understandings.
- Consult with culturally and linguistically diverse families and provide access to interpreting or translator services as required.

## Provide hygienic and safe food practices

### We will:

- Ensure children and staff implement safe hygiene and hand washing practices and safe practices for handling, preparing, storing and eating food
- 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 types and sizes) will be considered when preparing, cooking or sharing foods with children, appropriate to age and ability.
- 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.

- Ensure food is stored within food safe limits. For example, through using insulated lunch boxes and ice-bricks, refrigeration, or storing lunchboxes inside a temperature-controlled environment.
- 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 will:

Provide a supportive environment for families to feed their babies and young children, including comfortable seating and facilities to heat bottles.

## Promote environmentally responsible practices

### We will:

- Promote environmentally responsible and sustainable food and drink practices for food and drink bought to our preschool. For example, though composting, recycling; reducing and discouraging packaging, single use plastic waste, re-usable food storage containers and bringing own water bottle.
- 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 looking after our garden.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Preschool director

- 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

### 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**

the [Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool](#)

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR SNACK TIME**

Fruit, vegetables (e.g. celery/carrot sticks), cheese, dried fruit, cruskits, fruit bars, plain cracker biscuits, rice cakes, sandwiches, cold meat, yoghurt/custard

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR LUNCH**

sandwich/ roll /wrap, salad, rice, pasta, fruit & any of the foods that can be brought for snack

### **WE ARE DISCOURAGING**

Potato chips /cheezels/twisties etc, lollies sweet or chocolate biscuits, jelly chocolate, roll ups, muesli bars (containing nuts), LCMs

Please read packages for contents for all processed food to ensure levels of fat, sugar and salt are low, and without presents of nuts. If your child has special dietary requirements, please speak to staff.

### **Other considerations:**

Athelstone Preschool is a breastfeeding friendly site.

**PLEASE DO NOT SEND ALONG FOOD ITEMS THAT REQUIRE HEATING THIS IS NOT PERMITTED DUE TO HEALTH & HYGEINE REGULATIONS.**

The educators at Athelstone Preschool thank you in advance for your support in implementing this policy

## Sourced:

- [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)
- [Healthy eating for infants, children and teenagers](#)
- [Staying healthy guidelines | NHMRC Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services \(Section 3.3 Food Safety\)](#)
- [Nutrition, Food and Beverages, Dietary Requirements \(ACECQA Policy Guidelines\) \(PDF 265KB\)](#)
- [Get up and Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood - Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- [Get Up & Grow – resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood educators, families and carers](#)
- [Nutrition resources for children under 5](#)
- [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)
- [Eat for health – educator guide \(2013\) \(PDF 4.1MB\)](#)
- [health support planning for children and students in education and care settings](#)
- [Anaphylaxis and allergies procedure](#)
- [oral eating and drinking procedure \(PDF 304 KB\)](#)
- [supporting children and students with anaphylaxis and severe allergies](#)
- [Nutrition and dietary requirements in preschool \(edi.sa.edu.au\)](#)
- [Food safety](#)

## Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier if required by legislative updates, Department for Education changes, or service needs.

Version:	2 (2023, 2026)
Approved by site leader:	<i>Suzana Mladenovic</i>
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