

# FOOD SAFETY POLICY

## PURPOSE

This policy will provide guidelines for:

- effective food preparation safety practices at Melbourne Montessori School that comply with legislative requirements and meet best practice standards, and
- minimising the risk to children of scalds and burns from hot drinks.

Melbourne Montessori School is committed to:

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

## Background

Food safety is very important in early childhood School 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 prepared by a child's School:

- 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 Management Policy* and *Asthma Management Policy*).

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved in handling, preparing, storing and serving food for consumption at Melbourne Montessori School, and to the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of the School.

1. Business Manager
2. Nominated Supervisor
3. Teachers
4. Parents/Guardians

## DEFINITIONS:

**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 Management Policy*). Less common symptoms of food allergy include 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](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)

Melbourne Montessori is a nut free school.

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

**Food safety program:** A written plan that details what an individual business does to ensure that the food it sells or handles is safe for human consumption. A food safety program is an important tool for businesses that handle, process or sell potentially hazardous foods, as it helps to maintain safe food handling practices and protect public health. It should identify potential hazards in all aspects of food handling, describe how such hazards can be controlled/monitored, and define appropriate corrective action to be taken when a hazard is found to be under-managed. A food safety program must also include the requirements for appropriate record keeping. Class 4 Schools are not required to have a food safety program (refer to *Background*).

**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

### 1. THE BUSINESS MANAGER is responsible for:

- 1.1 ensuring that the Principal, Nominated Supervisor, staff and volunteers at the School 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 School (Regulation 77(1));
- 1.2 complying with all requirements of the School's food safety risk classification under the *Food Act 1984*, as outlined by local council, including implementing a food safety program and employing a food safety supervisor if required (refer to *Background* and *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety*);
- 1.3 providing parents/guardians with a copy of this policy, and with up-to-date information on the safe provision of food for their children;
- 1.4 ensuring that the Principal, 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;
- 1.5 ensuring that staff undergo training in safe food handling, as required;
- 1.6 monitoring staff compliance with food safety practices (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe*);
- 1.7 encouraging volunteers to complete training in safe food handling techniques;

- 1.8 ensuring that good hygiene practices are maintained at the School;
- 1.9 displaying hygiene guidelines/posters and food safety guidelines/posters in the food areas of the School for the reference of staff and families involved in the preparation and distribution of food to children;
- 1.10 ensuring that this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other School events;
- 1.11 ensuring measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies (refer to *Anaphylaxis Management Policy* and *Asthma Management Policy*);
- 1.12 identifying potential hazards that may reasonably be expected to occur at each stage of the food-handling and preparation cycle, and developing procedures to minimise these hazards. Stages of the cycle include ordering, delivery, storage, thawing, preparation, cooking, cooling, handling post-cooking, reheating and serving;
- 1.13 ensuring that all facilities and equipment for food preparation and storage are clean, and in good repair and working order;
- 1.14 providing a calibrated thermometer in good working order, suitable for monitoring the temperature of the fridge/freezer in food preparation areas. Glass thermometers containing mercury are not recommended in or near food preparation areas;
- 1.15 contacting local council to determine requirements prior to selling food at a fête, food stall or other School event. Such requirements may include completing a Food Act notification form and/or a statement of trade form;
- 1.16 removing pests and vermin from the premises;
- 1.17 informing DEECD, DHS and parents/guardians if an outbreak of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning occurs at the School;
- 1.18 informing families of the availability of cold storage facilities at the School to ensure parents/guardians make suitable food choices when supplying food for their own child, or for children to share;
- 1.19 keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety;
- 1.20 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 School and whenever these requirements change;
- 1.21 ensuring staff, parents/guardians and others attending the School 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 School*).

**2. THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR is responsible for:**

- 2.1 ensuring that staff and volunteers at the School 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 School (Regulation 77(2));
- 2.2 ensuring this policy is referred to when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other School events;
- 2.3 ensuring students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the School are informed of this policy.

**3. TEACHERS are responsible for:**

- 3.1 keeping up-to-date with current legislation, standards, policy, information and resources relating to food safety;
- 3.2 being aware of safe food practices and good hygiene practices (refer to *Sources: Department of Health – Food Safety: Keeping food safe and Hygiene Policy*);
- 3.3 referring to this policy when undertaking risk assessments for excursions and other School events;
- 3.4 informing students, volunteers, and casual and relief staff at the School about this policy
- 3.5 ensuring that children's lunchboxes are kept indoors, away from heat sources (including direct sunlight) and refrigerated if necessary;
- 3.6 discussing food safety with children to increase awareness and assist in developing safe practices;
- 3.7 discouraging children from sharing drink bottles or cups at the School;

- 3.8 ensuring that children do not share lunches to minimise risks in relation to children with food allergies;
- 3.9 providing adequate supervision of children while they are eating (refer to *Supervision of Children Policy*)
  - 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
- 3.10 encouraging parents/guardians to discuss a child's nutritional requirements, food allergies or food sensitivities, and informing the School where necessary;
- 3.11 seeking input from parents/guardians on cultural values or religious expectations regarding food handling, provision and consumption;
- 3.12 informing the Nominated Supervisor or Business Manager of any outbreaks of gastroenteritis or possible food poisoning at the School;
- 3.13 removing hazardous food including food that has fallen on the floor, and providing alternative food items;
- 3.14 maintaining good personal and kitchen hygiene;
- 3.15 covering all wounds/cuts on hands or arms with wound strips or bandages;
- 3.16 wearing disposable gloves when handling food;
- 3.17 complying with the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the School (refer to *Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the School*);
- 3.18 informing parents/guardians and visitors to the School about the guidelines in relation to the consumption of hot drinks at the School (refer to *Attachment 1 – Responsible consumption of hot drinks at the School*).

#### **4. PARENTS/GUARDIANS are responsible for:**

- 4.1 washing hands prior to participating in food preparation and cooking activities
- 4.2 ensuring that food preparation surfaces, utensils, lunchboxes and reusable drink bottles are clean
- 4.3 washing all fruits and vegetables thoroughly
- 4.4 wearing disposable gloves when handling food
- 4.5 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
- 4.6 complying with the requirements of this policy
- 4.7 providing details of specific nutritional requirements (including allergies) on their child's enrolment form, and discussing these with the Business Manager/Nominated Supervisor prior to the child commencing at the School and whenever these requirements change.

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

#### **SOURCES:**

- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code:  
[www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode.cfm](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodstandards/foodstandardscode.cfm)
- Department of Health – Food Safety. Contact the Department of Health if your inquiry relates to general food compliance issues (and you don't know where to start) or you are looking for publications on food safety or information on legislation.  
Telephone: 1300 364 352 (free call within Australia)  
Email: [foodsafety@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:foodsafety@health.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety)
  - Keeping food safe: [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/keeping.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/bus/keeping.htm)
  - Food safety at home and in the community: [www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/home/index.htm](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/home/index.htm)

**REVIEWED 2017**

**Linked with:**

- **Administration of First Aid Policy**
- **Anaphylaxis Management Policy**
- **Asthma Management Policy**
- **Excursions and Camp Policy**
- **Occupational Health and Safety Policy**
- **Supervision of Children Policy**
- **Staff Handbook**

**ATTACHMENT 1****Responsible consumption of hot drinks in the Cycle 1 areas.**

**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 Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor and all staff are responsible for:**

1. ensuring that hot drinks are only prepared and consumed in areas inaccessible to Cycle 1 children, such as the kitchen, staffroom and office;
2. ensuring that hot drinks are not consumed in, or taken into or through, children's rooms, outdoor areas or any other area where children are in attendance or participating in the program;
3. informing parents/guardians on duty, visitors to the School, students, volunteers and any other person participating in the program of the School's hot drink procedures and the reasons for such procedures;
4. ensuring that parents/guardians attending the School actively supervise children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, including siblings;
5. 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 School;
6. educating School users about the prevention of burns and scalds by providing relevant information (refer to *Sources: Burns and scalds – children and Kidsafe fact sheet*), including appropriate first aid for scalds;
7. implementing safety procedures in relation to hot drinks at School 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.