

Soldiers' Settlement Public School Preschool Procedure

Nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements



Reviewed: Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy at regular intervals throughout the year. Soldiers' Settlement Public School Preschool's Procedures must be reviewed and updated every 12 months. This policy is due for **review in October 2021**.

Associated National Quality Standard	Education and Care Services National Law or Regulation	Associated department policy, procedure or guideline
2.1	Regulation 78 Regulation 79 Regulation 80	Leading and Operating Department Preschool Guidelines Nutrition in Schools Policy Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Within the P-12 Curriculum
Pre-reading and reference documents		
ASCIA Guidelines for the prevention of anaphylaxis in schools NSW Food Authority: Children's Services Voluntary Food Safety Template Munch and Move Healthy Eating Resources Australian Dietary Guidelines Eat for Health Website		
Related procedure		
Dealing with medical conditions in children		

Procedure Statement

Soldiers' Settlement Public School Preschool recognises the importance of healthy eating to the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in their care. This procedure concerns the provision of healthy food and drink while children are in care and the promotion of normal growth and development. Our service has strategies in place to ensure food provided by families in lunchboxes is consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

The teacher and educators in the preschool are committed to implementing the healthy eating key messages outlined in *Munch & Move* and to supporting the *National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Early Childhood Settings*¹.

Guidelines developed in 2009 by child health and early childhood professionals in collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. The Guidelines are listed in the *Get Up & Grow* resources and in the *Munch and Move Resource Manual*.

Further, the teacher and educators at Soldiers' Settlement Public School Preschool recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink to their children. It is acknowledged that educators play an important role in supporting families in healthy eating.

This procedure aims to:

- Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines.
- Promote hygienic food practices.
- Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.
- Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood educators and families about healthy food and drink choices.
- Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the preschool.



Promote healthy food and drinks based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

The educators in the preschool will:

- Provide information to families on the types of foods and drinks recommended for children and suitable for children's lunchboxes.
- Encourage children to eat the more nutritious foods provided in their lunchbox, such as sandwiches, fruit, cheese and yoghurt, before eating any less nutritious food provided.
- Talking to families at pick-up time if they have provided unhealthy options that day about more appropriate foods that they may provide in the future.
- Educators will check lunchboxes at the beginning of each session to ensure that an ice brick has been provided, that foods adhere to known allergies in the preschool, and that foods comply with nutritional guidelines.
- Discourage the provision of highly processed snack foods high in fat, salt and sugar and low in essential nutrients in children's lunchboxes.
- Ensure water is readily available for children to drink throughout the day by asking families to provide a water bottle for their child. Spare cups and a jug of tap water will also be available throughout the day to children who may have forgotten to bring a drink bottle.
- Ask parents to provide a drink bottle with a covered mouth piece for hygiene purposes.
- Offer food and drink at regular and predictable intervals.
- Educators sit with children for meal times, and often will eat and drink with them to role model healthy food choices.
- Collect information from enrolment forms, initial parent teacher interview and conversations to understand children's food allergies, intolerances and special dietary needs. These will be added to the 'Special Considerations' table for easy access of information. A copy of this is located in the preschool induction and casual folders as well as being displayed in the office, kitchen and medication information corner next to indoor first aid kit.
- Develop a risk management plan for children with known allergies and anaphylaxis that will outline strategies to reduce exposure to known allergens.
- Minimise the risk of choking through appropriate supervision.
- Observe health and hygiene requirements in the preparation, storage, hygiene and handling of food including when implementing cooking activities with children. This also entails the use of food handling gloves and tongs.

- Encourage and provide opportunities for the teacher and educators to undertake professional development to maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills related to early childhood nutrition, food safety and hygiene.

Promote hygienic food practices.

The educators in the preschool:

- Ensures children and staff wash and dry their hands (using soap, running water and single use or disposable towels) before handling food or eating meals and snacks. Children's hand-washing practices are observed at all times.
- Discourage children from handling other children's food and utensils.
- Ask families to provide two cooler bags with an ice-pack in each to ensure items in children's morning tea and lunch boxes remain fresh.



Provide a positive eating environment which reflects cultural and family values.

The educators in the preschool will:

- Endeavour to recognise, nurture and celebrate the dietary differences of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- Encourage the children to open their own lunchboxes and serve their own food and drink or get themselves a cup of water if needed. This fosters children's independence and self-esteem.
- Respect each child's appetite. If a child is not hungry or is satisfied, educators do not insist he/she eats.
- Be patient with messy or slow eaters.
- Encourage children to try different / new foods but will not force them to eat.
- Not use food as a reward or withhold food from children for disciplinary purposes.

Promote lifelong learning for children, early childhood staff and families about healthy food and drink choices.

The educators in the preschool will:

- Foster awareness and understanding of healthy food and drink choices through including in the children's program a range of learning experiences encouraging children's healthy eating.



- Encourage children to participate in a variety of hands-on food preparation and cooking experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in discovery learning and discussion about healthy food and drink choices.
- Investigating the vitamins, sugars and fats inside fresh versus processed foods



Encourage communication with families about the provision of appropriate healthy food and drinks for children while they are attending the preschool.

The educators in the preschool will:

- Provide a copy of the Nutrition Procedure to all families upon orientation at the preschool. Families will be provided with opportunities to comment on the procedure which will be used to update the procedure as required.
- Communicate regularly with families about food and nutrition related experiences within the preschool and will provide up to date information to assist families to provide healthy food choices at home and for school.
- Communicate regularly with families and provide information and advice on appropriate food and drink to be included in children's lunchboxes. This information may be provided to families in a variety of ways including newsletters, pamphlets, during orientation and informal discussion.



Special events:

In the case where families provide food for special events, celebrations or birthday parties, "sometimes" food may be provided by families. This food must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Food must be accompanied with a list of ingredients contained in the product.
- Must not contain any ingredients that children in the preschool are allergic to. These prohibited foods are outlined for families in posters around the preschool and in newsletters.