



Nutrition & Beverage Policy

Keep a copy of this policy in the kitchen for easy access and use.

Aim

At Sutherland Presbyterian Church Preschool we aim to provide children and families with access to information that can allow them to make healthy choices when it comes to food and nutrition through both planned and spontaneous opportunities through our routine and curriculum.

We take our role of providing nutritious and relaxing meal times seriously and ensure that children have access to healthy and well prepared foods and fresh water as they engage in the social aspect that meal times can provide.

Sutherland Presbyterian Church Preschool prioritises the safety, wellbeing and welfare of our enrolled children over all others. The aim of this policy is to allow us to support positive outcomes for all children through our approaches.

Scope

As a preschool children bring their own food into the preschool for all meals. We do not cook or prepare full meals for the children, and only monitor food brought in and provide food safety and nutrition guidelines to the families to aid them in their choices. As such we follow food safety requirements within the scope of this limited engagement with food processes. We do however provide food experiences such as cooking with the children and may provide basic food if a child is still hungry.

Implementation

Nutritional food:

- As our families provide their own food from home we share information regularly with the families on the type of foods that are suitable for children to bring in and encourage a range of healthy options while still reflecting the cultural meals children would access at home.
- Information is provided through a range of means including on enrolment (in the Enrolment pack), verbally, online, newsletters and by sharing Munch and Move fact sheets with families.



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- We work closely with families to understand the needs of their children and support selecting nutritional food where possible and working closely with allied health professionals to understand the needs of the child and how to support their nutrition within these parameters.
- When children have limited food preferences we work closely with the family to understand the child's background and health needs and ensure that the child and the family do not feel pressured to provide food that will not be eaten or could cause stress and anxiety for the child.
- Where families financial situation may impact their ability to provide a range of nutritional food for their child the preschool will supplement the children's food that they bring in from home with additional items such as fruit, vegetables and other nutritious items. Where we know a child has food sensitivities we will supply foods we know the child will eat even if they do not meet food guidelines.
- We work within best practice guidelines that promote positive interactions with food and limit food rules to prevent avoidant and disordered eating patterns. These approaches include:
 - Modelling appropriate food habits and eating similar or the same foods
 - Responding to children's cues of hunger and fullness
 - Regularly exposing children to new foods
 - Allowing children to discuss food preferences and dislikes
 - Avoiding bribing children to eat or engage with foods
 - Remaining calm and regulated during interactions around food to not model anxiety with children
 - Allowing children to decide what and how much they eat of the food they have been provided
 - Avoiding hurried eating and time expectations
 - Avoiding using food as a reward, punishment or to calm children down
 - Giving children feedback on positive eating behaviours
 - Managing anxiety around food through mindful activities such as breathwork, music etc.



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- Boost children's mood before meals using known enjoyable experiences to encourage more positive engagement with food
- Avoid fixating on the food and battling with children over food
- Avoid pressuring families to provide food that may trigger or distress their child
- Limit mealtime duration if children are not wanting to eat – do not force children to stay until they eat/finish
- Encourage independent feeding
- Allow age-appropriate mess and sensory exploration of food – do not constantly remind children to clean up or wipe their face etc.
- Avoid distractions such as screens during meal times – children should be present and engaged with the meal.

Mealtimes:

- The preschool follows a progressive mealtime routine - the children are able to advocate for themselves and eat and drink when they choose excepting limited circumstances such as during group time sessions. The older children will be taught to finish a task before having a snack. The children are taught the routine for a meal or snack - wash hands, collect morning tea box/ drink bottle from snack crates or ask an educator to give them access to the fridge to collect their lunch box and are supported to follow this routine themselves.
- All mealtimes reflect the needs of the children and provide opportunities for the children to demonstrate agency and autonomy.
- The location of mealtimes vary depending on the day and where the children are settled, and may be in inside or outside environments. Children with more complex or messy meals are encouraged to sit at tables however children have a choice to sit at the table or on the floor in a picnic style. This supports children to develop the skills needed when transitioning to school as many school mealtimes are eaten in spaces without a table. Therefore, balancing food on laps while remaining responsible for all of your belongings is an important skill to develop.
- During mealtimes educators take the opportunity to build relationships with the children through casual conversations as the children eat. They encourage children to develop their awareness of healthy food choices by discussing what is being eaten and encouraging children to choose healthier foods first. Educators also encourage children to build resilience by attempting to open packings and containers first, before asking for assistance. The action of asking for assistance allows children to advocate for their own needs and build confidence in doing this.



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- Educators will often eat alongside the children during meal times, especially at morning tea, to role model healthy eating practices and socially acceptable mealtime behaviours.
- Children are encouraged to eat food they have brought in in any order that they prefer and educators are supportive of this to allow children to create healthy relationships with food. The only parameters that are set for children within their eating from their lunch box is to ensure that they have considered leaving some food leftover for lunch so that they have something to eat later. We understand the importance of not creating labels and pressures around different types of food and when they should be eaten to support positive attitudes towards food for children.

Learning opportunities:

- Children have many opportunities to engage with discussions and develop awareness of nutritional food options throughout the curriculum. This could be anything from role playing with food in the home corner, reading books about different foods and different ways foods are sourced and used, and cooking with foods.
- The preschool has a vegetable garden that allows children to be involved in the growing of herbs, fruits and vegetables. This not only connects children to the process of food production but also provides children with the opportunity to sample different foods fresh from the garden, building their knowledge of taste preferences.
- Through these spontaneous and planned opportunities children's interests and needs are used to form a basis for the experiences and the educators encourage children to be aware of their own food preferences and even encourage children to respect other's food preferences by recognising diversity.

Beverages:

- Children have access to their drink bottles filled with water during the day and are encouraged to drink from these through the day. Water bottles are refilled in the kitchen throughout the day if necessary to ensure children have access to water at all times.
- As we move between the inside and outside environments the esky of drink bottles moves with us to allow children easy access to their drinks.
- The preschool has spare bottles available for any child who may have forgotten their bottle.
- Children are encouraged to take agency over their own thirst needs as they become more settled in the environment and particularly those who are transitioning to school soon. The educators will also remind children to have a drink to rehydrate if necessary.



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Specific dietary considerations:

- Families with children with allergies or intolerances to specific foods are asked to alert the service of this upon enrolment.
- The service has a nut-free policy and reminds families to not bring in items that contain nuts.
- As children are bringing in their own foods from home the responsibility falls on the family to ensure that dietary requirements are met. Educators will monitor the contents of lunch boxes and alert any concerns to the family.
- Families are encouraged to provide their children with foods that reflect meals eaten at home to allow for cultural sensitivities to be respected while allowing the children to feel a sense of familiarity during mealtimes.

Food Safety Procedures:

Hygiene and food safety practices:

- Food Safety:
 - Training - Food Safety Refresher - basic food handling
 - Follow food safety procedure
 - Monotiro and track food.
- Reheating food:
 - Ensure food is in a microwave safe container
 - Wash hands before touching food containers, and ensure gloves are worn if coming into contact with the food
 - Heat food to a maximum of 60°C using the food thermometer. Rinse the thermometer in sudsy water, followed by boiling water between uses.
 - Ensure food is a safe temperature for children to eat before giving it to the child



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- Refrigerating food:

- All lunches are to be stored in the refrigerator
- Products such as yoghurts or similar that are easily affected by heat are placed in the refrigerator to keep them cool for morning tea, especially in warmer weather
- Refrigerator temperatures for **both fridges** are checked daily as per the Daily Tasks – see Physical environment policy - and recorded on the Refrigerator Temperature Record form – See Appendix A.
- Refrigerators must be between 0°C and 4°C inclusive. Any temperatures outside of this should be reported and either corrections made to the fridge temperature manually or contact a repair person to attend for maintenance.
- No staff food should be stored in the same fridge as the children’s food. – Staff lunches will be stored in the Church fridge. Masking tape and a marker will be kept in the kitchen for staff to label their lunches with their name and the date. The Church Fridge is cleaned out once a term as per the Health & Hygiene Policy.

- Cooking with children:

- Ensure all participants have washed their hands with soap and water prior to the experience
- Ensure educators are wearing gloves during the experience and follow appropriate glove use guidelines
- Children should avoid direct contact with items such as raw eggs and if contact is made should wash their hands again immediately
- No uncooked products containing raw eggs should be consumed by children
- Follow all food allergy and allergen guidelines appropriate for children with medical conditions as per the Medical Conditions and Administration of Authorised Medication Policy.



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- Serving food:

- Any tables being used for meals are wiped down prior to the meal – See Health & Hygiene Policy
- When eating on the ground a clean mat is placed down for children to sit on
- Children and educators wash hands with soap and water prior to a meal
- Any food dropped onto the floor is discarded and children are encouraged to not touch the dirty food as they have washed their hands
- Educators wear gloves if touching a child’s food directly otherwise are careful to only handle the packaging
- New gloves are to be put on after touching food that has been on the floor to avoid cross contamination
- Educators are to be mindful of children only eating the food they have brought in to avoid issues with dietary requirements.

- Storing foods (Appendix F - displayed in Kitchen):

- Any food items or ingredients once opened will be recorded with the date that they were opened and stored in an airtight container in the appropriate storage area (cupboard, refrigerator, etc.)
- Any food product removed from the original packaging must be stored in a container that states the name of the food product, the date opened and the expiry/best before date. Depending on dietary requirements labels may also list ingredients of concern e.g. “contains gluten”
- Any foods products not to be consumed must be clearly labelled for the intended use e.g. for playdough use only. If removed from the original packaging the name of the food should also be present e.g. Flour.
- Church owned products will be labelled as “Church Use only” and should not be used by the preschool (Appendix E).
- A sign will indicate where foods for consumption or other use are kept (Appendix B).
- A sign will indicate the designated uses of the different fridges (Appendix C).



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- A Food Storage Audit will be completed once a term where all food products in the Food Storage Cupboard and both fridges will be checked to ensure the food is in date and meets all of guidelines (Appendix G).

Source

Staying Healthy in Child Care 6th Edition

<https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/retail/childrens-services>

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/latest-news/blog/creating-positive-mealtimes>

<https://activeability.com.au/dietetics/foster-positive-relationship-food-children/>

https://ww2.rch.org.au/emplibrary/ccch/PR_Eat_Behav_S2.pdf

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/arfid.html>

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/avoidant-restrictive-food-intake-disorder-arfid#how-to-help-your-child-with-arfid-at-home-nav-title>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5752637/>

Compliance evidence

Education and Care Services National Regulations (2025) 77, 78, 79, 80, 90, 155, 156, 168

National Quality Standards 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.2

Date of current review: May 2026

Date of last review: June 2020, Feb, 2018

Date of current review: 4th June, 2020 (new version of policy)

Date of next review: May 2027



Appendix B - Food Storage Cupboard Sign

**Food Storage Cupboard
Preschool Use only**

Contents to be checked quarterly

**Food Storage Cupboard
Preschool Use only**

Contents to be checked quarterly



Appendix C - Fridge labels

Children's Fridge - Preschool use only

Please use this fridge for:

- **Children's lunchboxes** incl yoghurt/ milk products (in warmer weather)
- Remove lunches from insulated bags before placing in fridge.
- **Playdough** - in the bottom tray

Church & Preschool Staff Fridge

Please use this fridge for:

- Preschool staff lunches
- Church food

Foods will be labelled as either church or staff
Staff items will be labelled with staff name and date.



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Appendix D - Fridge cleanout sign - one for each fridge

The next fridge cleanout is due on

Appendix E - Food Storage Audit & sign for food stage cupboard in kitchen

The next food storage audit is due on



Appendix E - Label for church owned items

Church Owned Items

These items are owned by the church and will not be used by the preschool.

The church will be responsible for overseeing the food safety of these items.

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Appendix F - Food storage sign for cupboards

Storing foods

- Any food items or ingredients once opened will be recorded with the date that they were opened and stored in an airtight container in the appropriate storage area (cupboard, refrigerator, etc.)
- Any food product removed from the original packaging must be stored in a container that states the name of the food product, the date opened and the expiry/best before date. Depending on dietary requirements labels may also list ingredients of concern e.g. "contains gluten"
- Any foods products not to be consumed must be clearly labelled for the intended use e.g. for playdough use only. If removed from the original packaging the name of the food should also be present e.g. Flour.
- a Food Storage Audit will be completed once a term where all food products in the Food Storage Cupboard and both fridges will be checked to ensure the food is in date and meets all of other guidelines.



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Appendix G - Food Storage Audit

Food Storage Audit - Carried out once a term

Year:

Task	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Food items/ ingredients are labelled with date opened.	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Food items/ ingredients are stored in airtight containers.	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Food products are either stored in original packaging or label showing name of product & expiry date	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:



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Items including gluten are labelled	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Food products not for consumption labelled eg "Playdough only"	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Church owned items are labelled as "Church Use only"	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:
Food storage cupboard is labelled	Date:	Date:	Date:	Date:
	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:	Initial:
	Actions:	Actions:	Actions:	Actions: