
Document Name:	Food Safety Policy
Document Type:	Policy
Document Number:	POL_MK_19.00
Domain:	Meli Kindergarten Services
Regulation:	National Quality Frameworks
Regulatory Area:	Quality Area 2
Version:	1.00
Document Status:	Approved
Approved On:	10/12/2025
Effective Date:	10/12/2025
Review Date:	10/12/2028
Approver:	CEO
Custodian:	Executive Director, Services

1. Purpose

This policy provides clear guidelines for:

- Implementing effective food safety practices at Meli Kindergarten Services (Meli) that comply with legislative requirements and reflect best practice standards.
- Minimising the risk of scalds and burns to children from hot drinks and other hot substances.
- Promoting a safe, inclusive, and hygienic food environment that supports children's health, wellbeing, and cultural needs.

Meli Kindergarten Services are committed to ensuring that all food provided, prepared, or consumed within the service is safe, hygienic, and appropriate for children, staff, and visitors. We aim to prevent foodborne illness, allergic reactions, and injuries related to food and drink, while fostering a culture of safety, inclusion, and respect for diverse dietary needs.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Meli Kindergarten Services and extends to educators, staff, volunteers, families, carers, contractors, and visitors who are involved in the provision, preparation, handling, supervision, or consumption of food and drink. It covers all food and beverages brought into, prepared at, or consumed on Meli Kindergarten premises, as well as during off-site activities such as excursions, picnics, and community events. Specifically, this policy addresses:

- Safe food handling, storage, and preparation
- Ensuring all food and beverages are managed in a way that minimizes health risks.
- Prevention of foodborne illness and allergic reactions
- Implementing practices to reduce the risk of contamination and allergic responses.
- Safe management of hot drinks and hot food
- Minimizing the risk of scalds and burns to children and others.
- Respectful inclusion of cultural, religious, and dietary needs
- Supporting diverse dietary requirements and preferences in all food-related activities.

These provisions apply to all food and drink activities both on-site and during off-site events, ensuring a safe, inclusive, and hygienic environment for children, staff, and the broader community.

3. Background

Food safety is a critical component of early childhood education and care. Young children are particularly vulnerable to foodborne illness due to their developing immune systems, and services have a duty of care to protect children from all hazards, including those related to food. Foodborne illness can result from bacteria, viruses, parasites, chemicals, or foreign objects in food, and poor food handling practices can also increase the risk of severe allergic reactions such as anaphylaxis.

Under the Food Act 1984 (Vic), all early childhood services that provide food must comply with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code. This standard introduces three food safety management tools: food handler training, appointment of a certified Food Safety Supervisor, and substantiation of critical food safety controls.

Sessional kindergartens supplying low-risk snacks such as cut fruit, milk, bread and cereals are classified as Class 4 (low risk). Class 4 services are not required to have:

- a food safety program
- a food safety supervisor
- an annual council inspection.

4. Definitions

Allergen – refers to a substance in food that can cause an allergic reaction in some individuals. Common allergens include peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish.

Cross-contamination – refers to the transfer of harmful bacteria or allergens from one food, surface, or utensil to another, which can occur through improper handling or cleaning.

Food allergies – refers to adverse immune responses to specific foods, which may cause severe reactions such as anaphylaxis.

Food handler – refers to any person involved in the preparation, handling, or serving of food or food-contact surfaces.

Food safety program – means 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 services are not required to have a food safety program.

Hot drink – refer to any liquid above room temperature (25°C) that poses a risk of scalding.

Low-risk foods – refers to foods that are unlikely to contain pathogenic microorganisms and will not support their growth. Examples include bread, dry cereals, fresh fruit, pasteurised milk, and pre-packaged snacks.

High-risk foods – refers to bacteria that has the potential to cause food-poisoning can grow and multiply on some foods more easily than others. This can 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.

Scalds – refers to burns caused by hot liquids, steam, or vapours.

5. Policy

Meli Kindertuinen is committed to:

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

6. Delegations and Responsibilities

The **CEO** is responsible for:

- Ensuring Meli maintains organisational compliance with the Food Act 1984 (Vic) and relevant food safety standards across all kindertuinen services.
- Providing executive leadership to embed food safety within Meli's broader governance, risk, and quality frameworks.
- Approving the Food Safety Policy and ensure it aligns with Meli's strategic objectives and child safety commitments.
- Promoting a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement in relation to food safety and child wellbeing.

The **Executive Director Services** is responsible for:

- Providing operational leadership to ensure food safety practices are implemented consistently across all Meli Kindertuinen Services.
- Overseeing the development, implementation, and review of food safety procedures and training for educators and staff.
- Monitor compliance with food safety requirements through internal audits, incident reporting, and service-level reviews.
- Ensuring the Children's Services Program Director manages food safety risks, including allergy management and hot drink safety.

Program Directors and Managers are responsible for:

- Implementing and monitoring food safety practices in daily operations.
- Ensuring staff and volunteers have appropriate food safety knowledge and skills.
- Maintaining records of food safety training and any incidents related to food handling.
- Communicating with families about food safety expectations, including allergy management.
- Ensuring allergy and anaphylaxis practices meet legislative and guideline requirements.
- Ensure ASCIA Action Plans, medical condition risk assessment plan, and communication plans are in place for children at risk of anaphylaxis, stored with medication, and reviewed annually.

Early Childhood Teachers, Educators and All Other Staff are responsible for:

- Following safe food handling and hygiene practices at all times.

- Supervising children during food-related activities to prevent contamination or injury.
- Preventing cross-contamination of allergens and follow individual allergy management plans.
- Storing, preparing, and serving food in accordance with service procedures.
- Reporting any food safety concerns or incidents to Kindergarten leadership.
- Complete anaphylaxis training every 12 months, including e-training and autoinjector practice.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- Providing food that align with this policy.
- Informing Meli Kindergarten Services of any allergies, dietary restrictions, or cultural food requirements.
- Avoiding sending high-risk foods or hot drinks into the kindergarten environment.
- Labelling all food containers clearly with the child's name and ingredients if required.

Contractors, Volunteers and Students

- Comply with this policy.
- Following staff instructions when assisting with food-related activities.
- Completing basic food safety induction or training as required.
- Reporting any food safety risks or incidents to a staff member immediately.

7. Policy Application

To ensure the values and objectives of this policy are achieved, Meli Kindergartens will:

- Seek regular feedback from educators, staff, families, and other stakeholders on the effectiveness and clarity of the policy.
- Monitor implementation and compliance, including the handling of food safety incidents, complaints, and concerns raised by staff or families.
- Investigate any food safety issues, such as suspected cases of foodborne illness (e.g. gastroenteritis or food poisoning), and take appropriate corrective action.
- Review and update the policy to reflect changes in legislation, research, sector guidance, and best practice in early childhood food safety.
- Undertake scheduled policy reviews as part of the service's continuous improvement and policy review cycle, or earlier if required due to emerging risks or incidents.
- Notify all affected stakeholders of any significant changes to this policy or its procedures at least 14 days in advance, unless a shorter timeframe is necessary to manage risk.

8. Legislation, Acts, Standards

- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- Food Act 1984 (Vic)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

9. Related Documents

Sources

- [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#)
- [Department of Health – Food Safety \(Victoria\)](#)
- [A Guide to the Management and Control of Gastroenteritis Outbreaks in Children’s Centres](#)
- [DoFoodSafely – Free Online Food Safety Training](#)
- [Classifications for food businesses \(DoH\)](#)

Related Policies

- Administration of First Aid Policy
- Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy
- Asthma Policy
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy
- Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy
- Diabetes Policy
- Excursions and Service Events Policy
- Hygiene Policy
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Interactions with Children Policy
- Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Staffing Policy
- Supervision of Children Policy

10.Document History

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified	Updated By
1.00	CEO	10/12/2025	10/12/2025	New policy	Cassandra Gallop