

Nutrition and Food Handling

1. Overview

1.1. Purpose

The provision of a safe and healthy environment is vital for children. This includes providing nutritious meals and ensuring safe food handling practices to reduce the risk of harm.

1.2. Scope

All Junior Adventures Group (JAG) People are required to comply with the provisions set out in this policy, their contract of employment, and all other relevant policies, procedures, and legislation.

1.3. Legislative Requirements

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, JAG is required to have policies and procedures in place to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of the children in care.

2. Policy Statement

JAG is committed to providing healthy and safe practices that support good nutrition through planning and good food handling practices. JAG recognises and acknowledges the importance of providing food that is both nutritious and appropriate to meet the needs of the children attending the Service. A table outlining state specific guidelines can be found in section 3.5.

3. Principles

3.1. Duty of Care

Team Members have a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children attending the Service. This includes reducing the risks associated with common food allergens, as well as the preparation of food. Each service will incorporate the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommendations and abide by the relevant food safety practices for their state. Individual services will consider the individual child's dietary needs and choices when service planning.

3.2. Promotion of Safety and Nutrition

We actively promote safe food handling through team members demonstrating good practices. Posters and other communication will support children in practising safe food handling and hydration when attending the Service.

Team Members will promote healthy eating, and the importance of hydration, as well as dietary needs and choices within the service. Mealtimes will provide positive learning experiences and aim to promote healthy eating choices as well as eating habits in a social environment.

Information about nutrition will be provided to families through recipe ideas, nutrition booklets/pamphlets, current guidelines, and other relevant materials.

3.3. Supervision

Our approach to supervision includes identifying risks and emergencies and following the appropriate practices to respond in a way that minimises harm to children and team members.

Team Members will use active supervision principles during food experiences and meal time to ensure that risks are minimised during meal time (i.e safe food handling, sharing foods and bringing in foods from home)

3.4. Service Planning

Children learn and experience food differently. They also have different preferences and previous exposures to food. Menu planning will consider individual needs and lifestyle choices and nutritional guidelines and reflect the community that attends the Service.

Recognising the varying experiences, that children attending will have with food and nutrition, we will adjust our program to accommodate and encourage variety and exploration. Children are encouraged to participate regularly in food experiences.

Where new foods and food experiences are introduced to the service, Service Leaders will consider risks such as food handling, preparation requirements and dietary needs and choices when planning.

The importance of good, healthy food and hygienic and safe food handling in everyday life is recognised and learning about this forms part of the program. Where possible, in-season fresh food, free from preservatives, will be available to children. Drinking water will always be available and easily accessible to children.

Food preparation facilities will be maintained in a hygienic condition during children's learning experiences involving food.

Children's learning experiences involving food will be planned with input from children, families, and educators.

Recipes for all children's learning experiences involving food will be available to families upon request.

3.5. Menu Planning

Planning of the Service's menu will be guided by food intake recommendations and feedback from children attending the Service. Menus will incorporate children's individual needs, including dietary needs and choices, allergies, culture, and background.

To enrich the program, we also encourage children and families to share their recipes and rituals from home; these can be incorporated into the program.

We apply our nutrition and food safety knowledge when planning food appropriate to the weather. JAG People follow our procedures and practices, in line with Food Safety and Handling and Medical Management to ensure health and safety is maintained within the service.

Children's learning experiences will consider special dietary requirements, medical needs, and cultural and religious beliefs and choices.

The menu will be on display for parents and guardians. Regular feedback will be sought through conversations with families and surveys, and the program will be continually evaluated. Recipes will be provided to families on request.

Resources for Healthy Food and Drink Choices

Location	Resource
Australia	Australian Dietary Guidelines Eat for Health – Educator Guide
QLD	Smart Choices
NSW	Eat Smart, Play Smart
ACT	Go for Green
VIC	VIC Kids Eat Well
WA	What’s on the Menu

3.6. Leading Safe Practices

Service Leaders are lead by JAG People who regularly assess and build capability in risk identification, mitigation, and emergency response. This includes internal and external training to build knowledge and responsiveness.

Our Service Leaders will direct responses to emergencies on site and follow our emergency procedures. This will include reviewing and learning from the incident and how our systems and team members responded at the time.

Food, including lollies and other ‘treats’, is not used as a reward or punishment through its provision or denial. Where food is offered as part of a seasonal ‘treat’ (Birthdays, or Holiday Events), Team members must ensure that dietary needs and choices are considered during preparation of the food.

3.7. Food Handling

Team Members will adhere to safe food storage and preparation guidelines in the Australian Government’s Dietary Guidelines to ensure children’s protection from food-borne illness. Where applicable, Team Members will hold certification in food preparation, handling, and safety.

JAG people will adhere to appropriate standards and maintain the highest standard of health and hygiene practices. JAG people will follow handwashing procedures before handling, preparing, or eating food. Where food is prepared as part of the Service, JAG will provide safe, hygienic facilities for preparing, storing, heating, and cooking food for children, including a refrigerator, a sink and running water.

Service Leaders will conduct a risk assessment for accidental exposure to allergens while children with food allergies are attending the Service and develop a risk minimisation plan in consultation with team members and families.

3.8. Food Culture

Food and hydration play an important role in how children socialise, interact, and celebrate. We will consider this in our programming and service delivery. There are also culturally significant practices related to food. Our service planning recognises the individual needs and choices of the children that attend the Service and their families.

Recipes and food awareness activities are chosen from a variety of cultures. Families are encouraged to participate in the food culture by providing recipes or rituals or participating in the activities at the Service.

3.9. Parents and Guardians

We will work with parents and guardians to promote healthy eating and education about good nutrition.

Parents and guardians are responsible for advising the Service of allergies and dietary restrictions. This information is provided upon enrolment and kept on the enrolment record. Parents and guardians must update the Service when there is a change.

Parents and guardians are informed about their child's eating habits at the Service. Parents and Guardians will be consulted in Service's inclusion of the dietary needs and choices of children in their care, if required, opportunities are given to accommodate special dietary requirements for individual children. Families may be requested to provide their child's food if the Service cannot cater to their needs.

3.10. Bringing Food from Home

Where families are required to provide food for their children, the Service will promote relevant nutritional information and suggestions for healthy food and drink choices. Families are also made aware of food allergens present in the service and are asked to plan accordingly when providing food from home.

Team Members and families must ensure foods containing nuts or nut products (e.g., Nutella and peanut butter) or any other food items that may cause allergic reactions are not brought to the Service as they pose a significant risk to children with diagnosed allergies.

Items of food brought to the Service that pose a significant risk to other children or people will be removed, and the parent will be advised to provide alternative food choices for their child.

JAG people must ensure that food brought into the service, whether for children or themselves, are free from allergens that pose risk to children with diagnosed allergies. Team members will ensure that 'treats' brought for seasonal celebrations are captured in the program and that dietary needs and choices are considered during preparation.

3.11. Record Keeping and Regulatory Compliance

Records are kept to meet food safety requirements. On-site food safety audits, incidents and complaints will be documented, allowing us to track issues and enable changes in practice to be considered and implemented to maximise safety. Risk Management planning includes food safety.

Depending on the nature and amount of food provided as well as the structure of the Service, state or territory legislation may require the Service to be licensed. Where applicable, Management will discuss with the venue owner the requirements of facilities to comply with relevant food safety laws.

The Service Leader will ensure that all food preparation areas are safe and hygienic and comply with relevant laws and regulations. Up-to-date records will be maintained to meet compliance conditions.

Team Members are provided up-to-date information, including current information on principal Acts of Parliament, regulations and compliance resources relating to the state or territory they are operating in:

Location	Regulation and legislation
All states and territories	Are bound by the federal government food safety laws and local council legislation
ACT	Food Act 2001
SA/NT/WA/TAS	Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
NSW	Food Act 2003 (NSW) Food Regulation 2015 (NSW)
QLD	Food Act 2006 (QLD)
VIC	Food Act 1984

3.1. Child Safety

We safeguard children through our procedures and practices, with particular attention to nutrition and food handling practices during our service. Policies and practices reflect the relevant legislation, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. JAG provides policies and procedures to equip JAG people with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe. Service Practice are continuously reviewed and improved to ensure current legislation is in effect throughout the business. Children and Families are encouraged to have a say and are continuously informed and involved in Service Planning.

4. Key Terms

Term	Definition
JAG People	Any adult that governs, manages, conducts work for or provides activities to, JAG in a paid or unpaid activity spanning all levels of the organisational structure
Team Members	JAG People who work directly with children
Risk Management	Includes the identification, assessment, management, evaluation and review of risks in a setting
Service Leader	Anyone who oversees the Service in one of the following roles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Approved Provider; if the approved provider is an individual, in other cases, a person with management or control of the Service 2. The Nominated Supervisor of the Service 3. A Responsible Person who has been placed in day-to-day charge of the Service in the absence of the Nominated Supervisor.

5. References

Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
Guide to National Laws and Regulations
5th Edition Staying Healthy Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Service
Children Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Care

Australian Dietary Guidelines
Smart Choices, Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools, 2020
Go for Green, Healthy Food and Drinks for Children, 2017
National Health and Medical Research Council 2010. Australian Guideline for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare, NHMRC Canberra
Other Relevant Legislation
Regulation 77 – Health, hygiene and safe food practices
Regulation 78 – Food and beverages
Regulation 79 – Service providing food and beverages
Regulation 80 – Weekly menu
Regulation 86 – Notification to parents of incident, injury, trauma and illness
Regulation 87 – Incident, injury, trauma and illness record
Regulation 162 – Health information to be kept in enrolment record
Regulation 168 – Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Regulation 170 – Policies and procedures to be followed
Regulation 171 – Policies and procedures to be kept available
Regulation 172 – Notification of change to policies or procedures
Regulation 176 – Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
Related Policies
Safeguarding Children and Young People
Service Delivery Governance and Management
Maintenance and Confidentiality of Records
Related Procedures
02P006 Health and Hygiene Procedures
02P009 Menu Planning Procedures
07P012 Risk Assessment Procedures
Other
Quality Area 2 & 6: Standards 2.2, 6.2
Guide to National Laws and Regulations
OCG Guide to Child Safe Standards - https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme
CCYP Child safe Standards - https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles

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