

SmartFood GUIDE



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A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO EATING WELL

Section 5. Food safety

This is a section of the SmartFood Guide

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You can access other sections of the Guide on the School Food Matters website:
www.schoolfoodmatters.org.au



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FOOD SAFETY

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Food Safety requirements for the SmartFood Award

To complete the Food Safety section of the SmartFood Program, your school needs to:

- Submit a copy of your schools Australian Food Safety Assessment form completed and signed by your local council Environmental Health Officer (EHO).
- Ensure all food service staff and volunteers have the knowledge and skills to handle food safely. Local council websites have access to free online training courses.

To assist your school with its regular EHO inspection, there are example templates in the Templates section of the SmartFood Guide which can be used to document your food safety practices:

- **Template 3** – Cleaning schedule
- **Template 4** – Temperature record



- **Template 5** – Thermometer calibration record
- **Template 6** – Food handler training record

For an editable version go to:

www.schoolfoodmatters.org.au/accreditation/food-safety/

When you register your school food service as a food business with your local council you will receive a Certificate of Food Business Registration. This certificate is renewed annually. You do not need to submit the Certificate of Food Business Registration to complete the Food Safety section of the SmartFood Award.

Food safe practices

All foods must be protected from contamination. There are three categories of contamination:

- **Physical contamination** – foreign objects which have entered the food such as dead insects, glass, plastic, hair or metal. The risks of this type of contamination include choking; cuts to the mouth and the internal body; gastric obstructions; and broken teeth.
- **Chemical contamination** – any number of chemicals, including agricultural and pharmaceutical chemicals, cleaning products, fly spray, rat poison and naturally occurring toxicants and allergens.
- **Biological contamination** – bacterial, viral or parasite contamination that's transferred through saliva, pest droppings, blood or faecal matter. Examples include Salmonella, Listeria, Campylobacter and Noro viruses.¹

Good food safety practices minimise the risks associated with these types of contamination. Follow the manufacturer's storage instructions to be sure food stays safe and suitable for its expected shelf life whilst in the fridge or freezer.

If you have any questions about food safety, please contact your local council EHO or Environmental Health Services (Department of Health) at public.health@health.tas.gov.au or by calling the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.



Responsibilities of food handlers

Table 1: Responsibilities of food handlers

Area	Requirements
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All food handlers must have skills and knowledge in food safety. Local council websites have free online training courses.• Keep current with any changes in food safety information by completing the training every 2 to 3 years.• Keep records of food safety training that staff and volunteers have completed.
Personal hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All food handlers must maintain personal hygiene by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– washing their hands regularly– wearing minimal jewellery e.g. a plain wedding band only– keeping their fingernails trimmed, clean and free from nail polish or false nails– keeping long hair tied back or wear a hat or hairnet– avoiding touching their nose, mouth, hair and skin; and– wearing an apron.
Staff illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and volunteers who have cold and flu-like symptoms such as fever, cough or sore throat or foodborne illness such as diarrhoea or vomiting should not be handling food. They can pass on illness via the food they touch and should be excluded from food handling duties until they are symptom free for 48 hours.• Food handlers who have wounds such as a skin sore, boil, or an infected cut or abrasion must cover the wound with a coloured, waterproof dressing, and avoid touching the wound during food preparation activities. Staff must wash and dry hands if direct contact with a wound occurs.• Report these illnesses to the school, as per school policy.



All food handlers must wash their hands regularly.

Delivery and storage of food

Table 2: Food safety: delivery and storage of food

Area	Requirements
Deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy foods from reputable suppliers. • Check 'use-by' dates and the condition of the packaging. Reject deliveries if items are not within the use-by date or the packaging is damaged e.g. dented cans, gnawed packaging. • Check the temperatures of chilled foods and reject them if they are not cold when they are delivered. • Ensure frozen foods are frozen solid. • The use of home-grown vegetables, fruit or herbs from the school garden is encouraged. Remove any visible dirt and wash before use.
Storage: general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep floors clear to aid cleaning and to prevent pests. • Rotate stock.
Storage: chilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep raw and ready to eat foods in separate containers in separate parts of the fridge. • Stock your refrigerator properly e.g. place raw meats on the bottom shelf so juices cannot drip onto other foods. • Keep foods below 5°C – record the temperatures every operational day. The easiest way to do this is to keep a thermometer in the fridge and read the temperature from it. • Follow the manufacturer's instructions on storage conditions and the shelf life of the product after it has been opened. • Code foods with the date when packets are opened. • Home-made products can be kept refrigerated for around 2-3 days.
Storage: frozen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep frozen food frozen solid and do not re-freeze if thawed. • Frozen foods can be kept for varying amounts of time; see Table 5 for details. • Code fresh foods with the date they are frozen. • Foods should be dated when removed from the freezer. • Follow manufacturer's instructions for foods purchased frozen: take note of the shelf life and cooking instructions.
Follow the 2 hour / 4 hour rule ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially hazardous foods can be held out of temperature control for a certain amount of time. • Between 0-2 hours the food can be put back in the fridge (<5°C) and used again later. • If out for between 2 and 4 hours the food must be served. • After 4 hours the food must be discarded. • The time is cumulative and includes preparation time. For example, if you are making sandwiches for display at ambient temperatures, and it takes an hour to make them, you have used 1 of the 4 hours already. The sandwiches could either be displayed for one hour then refrigerated for use the next day or they can be displayed for 3 hours and discarded. • Smell and appearance are not a good guide to food safety or the risk of food poisoning. Bacteria do not spoil a food or create an 'off' odour. • Contact SFM or your local EHO for advice if you are unsure.

Handling food

Table 3: Food safety: handling food

Area	Requirements
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands before handling food. Ensure it is only handled by gloved hands or by utensils. • Wash fruits and vegetables in running water before cutting and serving them. • Use separate utensils for raw and ready-to-eat foods. • Cover foods prepared in advance with cling wrap or in lidded containers. • Do not use foods past their 'use-by' date. • Defrost foods in the refrigerator, in running cold water or in the microwave. • Use designated sinks for their intended purpose. • Use standard recipes for allergen control.
Cooking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook foods to 75°C. • Document cooking temperatures every operational day. • Use a probe thermometer to check temperatures. Place the probe into the centre of the food and wait until the reading stabilises. • Calibrate the thermometer every month e.g. check that it is working properly by placing it in iced water: it should show 0°C and then in boiling water, it should show 100°C. If it shows a different temperature, it needs to be repaired or replaced.
Cooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cool foods to below 5°C within a 6 hour period. • Food can go in the fridge as soon as it stops steaming. • Clearly date and label all food before storing it in the fridge. • Cooling can be accelerated by dividing the food and putting it into smaller containers, standing the container of hot food in cold water or ice, or moving it to a cool place like a storeroom.
Reheating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reheat food until steaming hot throughout. • If using plastic containers, choose 'microwave safe' products.



Use a probe thermometer to check temperatures when cooking

The food service environment

Table 4: *The food service environment*

Area	Requirements
Service / display	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When displaying cold foods, use the 2 hour 4 hour rule explained in Table 2. • Keep hot food above 60°C, for example in a bain-marie. • When using a bain-marie, cook/reheat the food first then place it in the bain-marie hot. Do not place cold food to warm in the bain-marie as they warm food slowly and the food will spend too long in the temperature danger zone. • Keep foods covered where possible. For example, serve foods from behind a sneeze guard or serve foods in packages. • Keep food service and money handling separate e.g. use one hand for service and the other for money or have one person for each task.
General cleaning and sanitising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly clean the entire kitchen, including the harder to reach areas. • Keep the kitchen in a clean condition – clean as you go! • Sanitise food contact surfaces and utensils. Heat is the best way to do this such as in a commercial dishwasher, but food grade chemical sanitisers may also be used. • When using chemical sanitisers always follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not mix with other chemicals. • Use a cleaning schedule that details process, products and frequency.
Procedure for sanitising surfaces and equipment with chemical sanitiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove visible dirt and food debris. • Wash with warm soapy water. • Sanitise following the instructions on the sanitiser label. If used incorrectly or mixed with other chemicals, it will not work. Usually a sanitiser is diluted in a sink of water for smaller equipment and sprayed for larger items and surfaces. • Leave to air dry.
Premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep premises free of pests and ensure the kitchen is pest proof with fly screening – where practical, air curtains or tight-fitting doors and windows kept closed. • Check for signs of pests e.g. droppings, gnawed packaging, grease marks on walls. If found, act immediately by reporting it to the school. • The kitchen must have a designated hand-wash basin. • The kitchen should have a double bowl sink for cleaning and sanitising equipment, or a single bowl sink with a dishwasher. • A food preparation sink is also required • Floors, walls, ceilings and work surfaces should be smooth and impervious to water and food particles. • Equipment must be kept in good condition to prevent contamination. If equipment needs to be replaced, alert the school immediately and keep a record of the request. • Relevant food safety posters are available from SFM. • Ensure food safety practices are documented as part of the food service procedures included in the school food policy/s. Keep a copy in the food service area.

Freezing guidelines

Remember to check labels and follow the manufacturer's instructions for freezing. Below are some examples to guide you. Your freezer should be set at -18°C.

Table 5: Recommended maximum storage times for best quality³

Food item	Storage (months)
Meat, chicken, fish	
Chops and steak	6
Mince	2
Whole chicken (unstuffed)	6
Poultry pieces	3–4
Cooked chicken	1
Fish and seafood	2
Bacon, ham and other cured meats	1
Cooked food	
Casseroles containing meat	2–3
Soup	2–3
Frozen vegetables	6
Stewed or pureed fruit	6
Cooked legumes	6
Stock	2
Muffins, scones and cakes	3
Pies and pastries	2–3
Basic ingredients	
Bread	3
Icecream and sorbet	2–3
Butter and margarine	4
Cheese (best frozen grated)	5
Milk	1
Uncooked egg whites	12
Pastry	6

Food safety at school events

When hosting school events where food and drinks will be provided such as the school fair, refer to and follow the procedures set out in your local council's temporary food stalls guidelines. Food safety is just as important for school events as it is for the day-to-day running of your school food service. A food stall may need a temporary food registration status. Contact your local council EHO for advice.



Gluten Free Standard

Coeliac Australia (CA) have a 'Gluten Free Standard' which they developed for the Australian food service sector as the best practice for gluten free food preparation. CA urges all food service establishments to implement the Standard when offering gluten free options.

There are three main principles to the Standard:

- **Source** – ensuring all components on the gluten free menu are gluten free.
- **Segregate** – ensuring that all the ingredients are free from cross contamination throughout all stages of meal preparation.
- **Service** – staff training and ensuring clear communication lines between students, families and food service staff.

For more information on the Gluten Free Standard go to:
www.coeliac.org.au

References

1. Australian Institute of Food Safety. Frequently asked questions: What are the different types of food contamination [Internet] [cited 2021 April 27]. Available from: www.foodsafety.com.au/faq/what-are-the-different-types-of-food-contamination
2. Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Safe Food Australia InfoBite: 2-hour/ 4-hour rule [Internet] [cited 2021 April 27]. Available from: www.foodstandards.gov.au/foodsafety/standards/Documents/2hour4hour_Final.pdf
3. Healthy Food Guide. How long can I store frozen food? [Internet] [cited 2021 April 27]. Available from: www.healthyfood.com/resource/freezer-guide/

