



Riverview Preschool Food and Nutrition Policy



Good nutrition is important for children's growth and development. The Riverview Preschool's food and nutrition policy aims to support families and children in their provision and education of healthy, nutritious, and varied food choices for their child whilst in preschool or occasional care. Our policy is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (revised 2003; NHMRC). The policy will be reviewed every two years and will be communicated to parents at enrolment and kept in the Centre Policy Folder. Families are responsible for providing the food at Preschool, to encourage families to follow the Healthy Eating Guidelines, they will be issued with the pamphlets "Lunchbox Checklist", Visual Food ideas chart and "Ideas to increase Essential Food groups in the Lunchbox" at enrolment. In partnership with parents, Riverview Preschool aims to promote and encourage the establishment of good eating habits early in a child's life.

Food brought from home

All food and drink is provided by parents. Water is available at the centre if required. Snacks are kept in children's school bags with an ice pack for access during the morning. Educators put children's lunches into the fridge for health and safety purposes. If food is required warm, please bring a thermos and notify a staff member. Families who request their child's lunch to be left outside of the fridge are made aware of food safety requirements and are required to sign consent forms. Due to food safety guidelines, staff are unable to heat children's food as they are unable to safely manage the temperature of food.

Parents will be encouraged to provide their child with a variety of food from the essential food groups and families will be supported to support this. Quantities may vary according to individual children's appetites. Lunch box guidelines and suggestions for, nutritious and safe foods will be given to parents on enrolment and are also attached to this policy. Food that is brought to the Centre outside of these guidelines (food with minimal nutrients, high in fat and/or sugar, or contains traces of allergies [nuts]) may be returned home with the child at the end of their preschool or occasional care session. Riverview Preschool is a part of the Kick Start Breakfast Club program which provides children with toast and fruit each morning and afternoon.

Children are provided with 3 opportunities for eating each day. They are encouraged to eat their snack or breakfast program food in the morning and afternoon, and their lunchbox at lunchtime. During lunchtime, children are encouraged to eat their 'big food' (sandwich, pasta etc) before their fruit and additional items.

Parents will be advised if their child is not eating well, or of any concerns.

Staff

Staff will actively support the Centre Food and Nutrition policy by:

- Helping parent's access nutrition information including healthy food choices and alternative options.
- Ensuring that all food consumed within sight of children adheres to the same guidelines established for the children.
- Sitting with children at meal and snack times in order to facilitate the provision of a safe, supportive and social eating environment for children.
- Teaching children about food and nutrition through food awareness activities and "hands on" food preparation activities and discussions.

Choking Hazards

To make eating safer for children staff will:

- Ensure children are always seated and supervised when eating.
- Never force a child to eat.
- Encourage children to eat slowly and chew well.
- Encourage children to feed themselves.

Children of any age can choke on food. Children under 4 years are most at risk because they:

- Do not have back teeth to chew and grind food.
- Are still learning to eat, chew and swallow.

Food Allergies and Intolerances

The needs of children with food allergies, food sensitivities or medical diets will be catered for in consultation with parents and the appropriate medical professionals. At/During enrolment, parents will be asked if their child has a known or suspected food allergy or intolerance. This information will be recorded on the child's enrolment form and an allergy form will need to be completed by the child's doctor/general practitioner. We will record the child's known or suspected food allergies/intolerances on an individual allergy photo card which will be laminated and displayed in the kitchen area alongside medications for all staff, including relievers to be aware.

Special diets for non-medical reasons (cultural, religious and other reasons)

Health professional input is not required but will be encouraged if the staff are concerned that the diet is not nutritionally adequate as a result of the diet request. Staff will ensure all religious or cultural diets are taken into consideration when planning cooking activities or events that require the centre to supply food.

Other Exceptions: yoghurts, custards, cheese sticks and dried fruit.

A visual suggestion chart is given to all families to ensure children and families are adhering to centre policy.

Perishable Foods.

Leftover food, which includes dairy products and other perishable foods, will be placed back in the fridge and handed back at the end of the day. Any food left on the counter/in a thermos will be discarded at the end of the day, due to limited ability to manage temperature.

Positive eating environment

We will create a positive eating environment that promotes social interaction and encourages children to try new foods. Staff will encourage children to take their time when eating without distractions such as screens or toys. Staff will encourage children to listen to their body's hunger and fullness cues, by explicitly teaching cues and by respecting their own and others' food choices.

In our context, children often will observe their peers playing and will choose this instead of eating, even if they are hungry. In collaboration with the Governing Council, we now implement three eating times across the day, each are 20 minutes. Children are encouraged to stay with their peers whilst they eat until they have had enough, followed by books or puzzles until the time is up. By providing 20 minutes of eating time/quiet play, it limits distractions of their peers playing and allows children to focus on their eating time and own individual body cues. It also provides a structured, consistent eating time to make the routine predictable for all children.

Special occasion/class party policies

Please do not send cakes or other birthday treats to kindergarten. To help celebrate a child's birthday, we encourage items such as stickers, stamps, bubbles, or pencils. If parents wish to bring in food, we ask them to provide a healthy snack avoiding foods with nuts (fruit skewers, sushi, or sandwiches).

During special events or end of year class parties, Riverview Preschool allows for less nutritious food to be used (known as orange or red foods). These foods must not contain nuts and cultural/religious/medical needs will be met.

Staff will monitor the distribution of foods deemed harmful to children with dietary needs.

All children are encouraged to use correct hand washing techniques to wash their hands before snacks/meals/cooking.

References:

Healthy Eating Guideline for schools:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+communities/schools/healthy+eating+guidelines+for+schools>

KickStart for Kids website:

https://www.kickstartforkids.com.au/about-us/?gclid=EAIAIQobChMI4o6dgqjZ7wlVzA0rCh0_oQbaEAAYASAAEgIIkfD_BwE

NQS Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard/quality-area-2-childrens-health-and-safety>

Australian Dietary Guidelines

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

APPROVAL DATE

March 2023

NEXT REVIEW

March 2025

Mealtime Guidelines

Parents' Role:

- Send a lunchbox, snack (fruits or vegetables) and water.

Educators' Role:

- Check Children's lunchboxes before placing in the fridge. Take out foods that contain nuts (fill out the 'nut notice'). If a child's lunchbox contains mostly unhealthy food, fill out a 'unhealthy notice'.
- Create a supportive environment for eating.
- Will educate about healthy and unhealthy food outside of children's mealtimes.
- Provide children will opportunities to sensorily explore food (besides touch). E.g. cooking
- Not label foods as 'good' or 'bad'
- Refrain from commenting on children's eating and food.
- Provide 3 mealtimes
 - **10:30am Mealtime (20 mins min.eating time):** Children grab their 'snack' from their bag. If children do not want to eat their snack, an educator can assist them to get their lunchbox from the fridge.
 - **12pm Mealtime (20 mins min. eating time):** Children sit at table (educators will place lunchboxes on the table).
 - **2pm Mealtime:** Optional for children. Educators provide cut up fruit/cheese/veg. Children can also eat leftover food from their lunchboxes.

Children's role:

- Place snack in their bag, water bottle in the trolley and lunchbox in basket.
- Choose what and how much they eat.

Hello, we noticed...

Your child is attending Preschool with a majority of what the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* recognises as 'sometimes foods'.

A child who eats a variety of foods from the five food groups is most likely to receive the sufficient amounts of all nutrients essential for their health. Attached is the Australian guide to Healthy Eating with more information. Also attached are examples of what your child's lunchbox could look like if following a healthy eating routine. We understand the complexities around eating healthily and if you enquire assistance or have questions, please don't hesitate to ask an educator.

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Examples of what the Lunchbox could look like

(Aim for more nutritious options rather than unhealthy foods in the lunchbox)



You could also pack left over tea from the night before!

