

Title	ELC and SAC Nutrition Food and Beverage Policy
Description of policy	Outlines requirements for Early Learning Centres and School Age Care to ensure they can meet nutrition, health and hygiene needs of enrolled children.
Required because	<p>Early Learning ELCs and SACs and School Age Care are required to have policies and procedures regarding health and safety matters (r168) and ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate health and hygiene practices including safe handling, preparing and storing food (r77) • Access to safe drinking water at all times and food and beverages appropriate to each child's needs on a regular basis throughout the day (r78) • That food and beverages are adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary requirements (r79), and • That a weekly menu is displayed and accessible to family members, in ELCs and SACs that provide food (r80).
Description of changes	Minor format and editorial changes.
Applies to	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ELCs&SACs <input type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Students only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff and students
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Major revision of existing document <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor revision of existing document

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This Policy outlines the requirements for Catholic Education Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CECG) Early Learning Centers (ELCs) and School Age Care (SACs) to provide and encourage nutritious food choices and safe food handling, preparation, and storage. It applies to all workers in all CECG ELCs and SACs.
- 1.2 CECG ELCs and SACs prioritise children's health, safety and wellbeing. This includes safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food, as well as providing food and beverages that are nutritious and adequate in quantity, and chosen based on each child's dietary and medical requirements.
- 1.3 ELCs and SACs value our families and their cultures, customs and religious traditions. ELCs and SACs will work with families to ensure that the food and beverages provided to their children reflect their preferences.
- 1.4 ELCs and SACs incorporate children's agency and decision-making into our educational program. We plan mealtimes and other food-related experiences that enable this.

2. ELC & SAC Nutrition Food and Beverage Policy

- 2.1 ELCs and SACs must ensure they abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations (r):
 - Food is handled, prepared and stored safely at the service (r77)
 - Children have access to safe drinking water at all times (r78)
 - Nutritious food and beverages are offered on a regular basis throughout the day, appropriate to each child's needs and dietary requirements (r79), and
 - A weekly menu is displayed and accessible to family members, in ELCs and SACs that provide food (r80).

3. Dietary Requirements and Allergy-Aware ELCs and SACs

- 3.1 Parents must inform ELCs and SACs of any dietary requirements or known allergies.
- 3.2 Where dietary requirements involve a health issue, ELCs and SACs will develop risk minimization plans for children in line with the [ELC and SAC Medical Conditions and Administration of Medication Policy](#).
- 3.3 ELCs and SACs will not provide food with nuts to children and will request all families not to bring food with nuts to the service (ground or tree nuts).
- 3.4 ELCs and SACs will notify all families of any known foods that cause anaphylaxis in children enrolled at the service and request them not to bring that food to the service. ELCs and SACs must also display a notice stating that a child who has been diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis and is enrolled at the service (r173(2)).
- 3.5 ELCs and SACs do not assume that food is free of nuts or other allergens, even where families have been requested not to bring those foods in. ELCs and SACs will promote other anaphylaxis strategies including:
 - Reminding children not to share food they bring to the service
 - Monitoring food brought into the service for nuts and other foods known to cause anaphylaxis in children enrolled in the service

- Ensure children wash hands before and after eating
 - Ensuring all children know which classmates have food allergies and know to tell an educator quickly if classmates with food allergies look or say they are sick, and
 - Class discussions on what allergies are and how people can support children with allergies.
- 3.6 ELCs and SACs that provide food will develop weekly menus with reference to known allergies and other dietary requirements.

4. Nutritious and Safe Food Practices

- 4.1 All Educators should complete safe food handling practices, for example [ACT Health food safety training](#).

Food Provided by service

- 4.2 ELCs and SACs that provide food to students will promote nutritious food choices and implement safe food handling, preparation, and storage procedures, including:
- [Registering as a food business](#) and complying with all requirements including [appointing a food safety supervisor](#) and notifying the Health Protection Service¹.
 - Complying with relevant food safety regulations including the [Food Act 2001 \(ACT\)](#), [Food Regulation 2002 \(ACT\)](#), and [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#).
 - Provide nutritious foods including primarily foods from the green category of the [Traffic Light System](#). ELCs and SACs will not provide foods from the red category in weekly menus.
 - Completing daily and term ELC and SAC Safe Food Handling Checklist.
 - Ensuring appropriate supervision and risk management for children during mealtimes and cooking experiences.

5. Food Provided by Families – Nutritious and Safe Food Practices

- 5.1 ELCs and SACs will promote nutritious choices and safe handling, preparation and storage of food where families provide their own food for children, including:
- Ensure children can easily identify the food they bring to the service.
 - Remind children not to share food they bring to the service.
 - Consider how food is stored between mealtimes and provide information to families about [lunchbox safety](#) and including cold bricks or similar cooling with food.
 - Encourage families to provide foods from the green category in the [Traffic Light System](#) and avoiding foods from the red category.
 - Requesting all children bring a personal water bottle.
- 5.2 ELCs and SACs are not required to serve food provided by families, for example if it would endanger children with allergies.
- 5.3 ELCs and SACs must ensure all children are offered food appropriate to their needs on a regular basis throughout the day.

¹ Refer to ACT Health [food business website](#) for further information

6. Educational Programming

- 6.1 ELCs and SACs should consider how mealtimes and educational programming can be used to promote children's agency, reflect their independence and choice, and involve them in decision making about healthy food and beverage choices. For example:
- Discussing nutritional food choices during education and mealtimes.
 - Cooking experiences with children.
 - Exploring cultural aspects of food and mealtimes.
 - Reflect how educator to child, and child to child, relationships can be supported during mealtimes.
 - Using food to explore science, maths and literacy concepts.

7. Definitions

- 7.1 **Regulation (r):** Education and Care Services National Regulations
- 7.2 **National Law (s):** Education and Care Services National Law Act.

8. Related Documents and Legislation

- 8.1 Related CECG Documents:
- [ELC and SAC Medical Conditions and Administration of Medication Policy](#)
 - [ELC and SAC Safe Food Handling Checklist](#)
- 8.2 Related legislation or Standards
- [ACT Food Safety Training](#)
 - [Food Act 2001 \(ACT\)](#)
 - [Food Regulation 2002 \(ACT\)](#)
 - [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#)
 - [Healthy Choices Traffic Light System](#)
 - [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

9. Contact

- 9.1 For support or further questions relating to this policy, contact the CECG Early Learning Team.