



Child Care – Nutrition, Food, Beverages & Dietary Requirements Policy

Blackburn North Neighbourhood House - Inc A0009540J

PURPOSE

Blackburn North Neighbourhood House (BNNH) is committed to encouraging food and beverages that:

- Are nutritious and adequate in quantity
- Are chosen having regard to the dietary requirements of individual children taking into account:
 - Each child's growth and development needs; and
 - Any specific cultural, religious, dietary or health requirements.

We encourage children, families and our staff to follow this guide - Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGTHE).

All Educators and staff will follow safe food handling practices and hygiene practices and support children to do the same at all times. Mealtimes will be used as social experiences and as an opportunity to develop self-help skills, sound hygiene practices and to learn about healthy food choices and healthy eating habits.

BACKGROUND

BNNH understands it has a duty of care to ensure that children's nutritional and health needs are met and food is stored and served safely within education and care services. Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. All children have the right to develop to their full potential in an environment which provides for their health and wellbeing.

We believe that by teaching children to eat wisely and moderately we are supporting them to invest in their future health. Studies show that the habits that children learn during their first five years will significantly affect their future health. Nutrition in childhood influences growth, activity, intellectual and emotional development. The overall nutrition of children ultimately remains a parental responsibility. At BNNH families are encouraged to send healthy snacks and lunches with their children.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all BNNH staff, children, families and volunteers and will be supported to meet this policy.

PROCEDURE

BNNH:

- Recognises children as active participants in their own learning. Children are encouraged to make meaningful decisions about elements of their own education and care.

- Incorporates some progressive meal times into the educational program that allows children to choose to eat when they are hungry, rather than according to a timetable. Children gather in small groups to enjoy afternoon tea time, without interrupting the needs and play of others. This also encourages quieter, more social and meaningful interactions at these times and allows for a smoother flow throughout the day. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, and can be supported to access food and water throughout the day.

Feeding Guidelines (children under twelve (12) months)

- Parents inform staff about their child's feeding schedule.

Breastfeeding - including Expressed Breast Milk (EBM)

- Arrangements for comfortable breastfeeding at the Centre can be made if required.
- Parents can provide expressed milk if feeding by the staff is required.
- Parents will give EBM to staff immediately upon arrival in clearly labelled bottles for placing in the refrigerator.
- Parents will discuss with staff what to do if EBM runs out.
- Breast milk cannot be heated in the microwave.
- Place the bottle containing the breast milk in a jug of cool water and slowly add warmer water to the jug until the milk reaches the correct temperature (breast milk can only be warmed once)

Infant Formula

- Bottles are to be made up at home and given to staff, clearly labelled, for refrigeration.
- Alternatively bottles containing the correct measurements of boiled water and the correct amount of formula for each bottle can be brought in for the staff to make up. These bottles must be clearly labelled.

Heating bottles (excluding breast milk)

- The microwave will be used to heat the milk; care must be taken not to overheat the formula or milk. This milk can only be heated once, and any unused heated milk discarded with the amount consumed recorded in the feeding schedule. For fridge cold milk the following applies:
 - 30 sec on high for 90-120mls
 - 45 sec on high for 150-180mls
 - 50 sec on high for 180-240mls
 Use a shorter time if the bottles are not fridge cold.
- After heating, shake the bottle well to avoid "hot spots" which could cause burns to the baby's mouth and throat.
- Test the temperature of the milk on the inside of your wrist, if it is not warm enough heat for 5-10 sec more.
- Never heat breast milk in the microwave.

Introducing Solids

- Parents must inform staff when they have started introducing solids and advising which foods have been introduced.
- Staff encourage independence and self-help skills by allowing children to try to feed themselves with staff supervision or giving them a spoon to hold while a staff member also feeds the child with a spoon.

Heating of Solids

- Solid food must only be heated once, stirring to avoid “hot spots” which could cause burns to the child’s mouth and throat. Check that food has cooled enough before giving it to a child. Remove a small piece of food with a spoon to another plate and test the temperature with your hand. Throw this piece of food away and get a clean spoon. Never blow on a child’s food as a means of cooling it down; this spreads your germs onto the food.

Documenting Children’s Daily Intake

With infants, staff will record how many bottles, times, and millilitres as well as any solids consumed and inform parents when they pick up the child. Infants may have an individual communication book where this information is recorded for parents to take home.

Special Diets and Allergies (also refer to BNNH Anaphylaxis policy)

Parents must inform staff if the child has any special diets and/or allergies.

Special Occasions/Birthdays

We may have children with dietary intolerances and allergies so please discuss options with staff. A birthday is a special occasion and we celebrate by singing ‘Happy Birthday’ with an imitation cake. The parents celebrating the birthday are welcome to provide a treat such as a lolly bag or cupcake to share with other children. This will not be consumed during child care and be sent home with families.

Allergy Aware

BNNH is ‘allergy aware’ and we do not restrict any foods as a standard procedure. However, we will restrict certain foods in order to safely care for a child at risk of food allergies/anaphylaxis. The restriction of particular foods will be made on a case by case basis and be determined by consultation with parents and staff.

Morning Tea

- Morning Tea is served at a scheduled time.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a number of healthy food options for their child.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a piece of fruit.
- Adequate time is allowed for eating.
- Tables and chairs are appropriate height for children.
- We provide a calm, relaxed environment.

Lunch

- Lunch is served at a scheduled time.
- Parents are encouraged to provide a number of healthy food options for their child.
- Adequate time is allowed for eating.
- Tables and chairs are appropriate height for children.
- We provide a calm, relaxed environment.
- Children eat as a group – meals are a social occasion.

Beverages

- Water is always offered as the preferred choice for thirst.

- Parents are required to send a drink bottle.
- Children will have access to drink bottles at all times.
- Staff will refill drink bottle as required.
- Staff will ensure fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Cultural Differences

If your family has cultural beliefs that you wish staff to observe with your child, please communicate this to staff and write on your child's enrolment form.

Supervision During Meals

- Staff sit with the children during meals (morning tea and lunch) and interact, providing assistance to children and conversation.
- Afternoon tea is progressive and a staff member supervises and interacts with children, offering assistance when required.
- Children and staff are required to sit while eating.
- Staff are responsible for adequate supervision for all children during meal/snack times.

BNNH is responsible for ensuring:

- The environment and educational program supports children and families to make healthy choices for eating and active play.
- The implementation of adequate health and hygiene procedures, such as handwashing and cleaning table surfaces, and safe practices for handling, preparing, and storing food to minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service.
- That all staff and volunteer staff comply with the *Food Act 1984 (Vic) Amended 2022*.
- That all staff are aware of a child's food allergies and/or other medical conditions on enrolment or on initial diagnosis.
- Measures are in place to prevent cross-contamination of any food given to children with diagnosed food allergies and/or diabetes.
- Staff are aware of, and plan for, the dietary needs of children diagnosed with diabetes.
- That food and water are available to children at frequent and regular intervals throughout the day.
- Adequate supervision for all children during meal/snack times, especially discouraging the sharing of food.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGTHE)

Education and Care Services National Regulations regulation 77,78,79,80,168

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010

National Quality Standard 2

Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

Food Act 1984 (Vic) as amended 2022

Adopted by the Committee of Governance

Signature:	
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Position:	Chair
Date:	6/4/2023
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