

Nutrition and Dietary Requirements Policy

1. Purpose:

At Y Whittlesea, we are committed to promoting children's health, wellbeing, and development by providing safe, nutritious, culturally respectful, and developmentally appropriate food and beverages. This policy outlines our approach to:

- Supporting healthy eating behaviours through inclusive, social mealtimes
- Encouraging positive food-related learning experiences
- Respecting the cultural, religious, and health-related dietary needs of all children
- Collaborating with families to support continuity of healthy habits between the home and our services
- By fostering healthy eating habits and food literacy early in life, we aim to contribute to lifelong positive outcomes for all children in our care.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to all operations and services of The Y Whittlesea including Board Members, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

3. Policy:

Y Whittlesea is committed to fostering the health, wellbeing, and development of all children by promoting healthy eating and positive food habits from an early age. We believe that mealtimes are not just about nutrition—they are opportunities to build relationships, celebrate culture, and develop life skills.

We recognise the important role early learning services play in shaping lifelong behaviours and attitudes towards food. Through inclusive, respectful, and collaborative practices, we aim to provide safe, nutritious, and developmentally appropriate food and beverage choices that reflect each child's individual health needs, cultural identity, and family preferences.

This policy ensures that food and nutrition practices across our services:

- Support children's physical growth, learning, and emotional wellbeing
- Reflect respect for cultural, religious, and family values
- Empower children to participate in food-related decision-making
- Promote equity, inclusion, and safe environments for all
- Involve families in meaningful partnerships to support consistent healthy eating behaviours across home and service settings
- Y Whittlesea upholds relevant legislation, regulations, and best-practice guidance to create an environment where children can thrive—at the table and beyond.

4. Responsibilities:

Approved Provider

- Ensure compliance with National Law, National Regulations, and Food Safety Standards
- Ensure all food handling, storage, and preparation practices are safe and hygienic
- Ensure nutritious food and beverages are provided in line with individual dietary requirements and preferences
- Ensure safe drinking water is available at all times
- Display an accurate and accessible **weekly menu** for families
- Ensure enrolment records include relevant dietary, cultural, and health information
- Support the development of **risk minimisation plans** for children with medical conditions related to food
- Promote healthy eating across the service and maintain accessibility of this policy and associated procedures

Nominated Supervisor

- Oversee implementation of this policy and related procedures
- Ensure food practices meet safety, nutrition, and regulatory standards
- Support collaboration with families regarding dietary needs, health requirements, and cultural preferences
- Maintain accurate enrolment information regarding allergies or food restrictions
- Ensure communication systems are in place between families, educators, kitchen staff, and management
- Promote program planning that includes food education, children's agency, and involvement in healthy choices
- Ensure risk minimisation plans are developed and followed for children with medical needs affected by food

Educators and Staff

- Follow all policy and procedures for nutrition and dietary needs
- Safely handle, prepare, and store food in accordance with regulations
- Supervise children during mealtimes and promote a relaxed, social eating environment
- Monitor and document food and beverage intake to ensure adequacy and appropriateness
- Be familiar with and implement action plans for children with specific dietary requirements
- Communicate daily with families about food, health needs, and changes in dietary requirements
- Engage children in discussions about food and include them in preparation where appropriate
- Promote healthy food choices through role modelling and intentional teaching

Kitchen Staff / Cook

- Implement the policy and carry out all requirements of dietary and allergy-related action plans
- Plan menus that are nutritious, culturally inclusive, and age-appropriate
- Handle, prepare, and store food using safe practices
- Display weekly menus for families and update as required
- Maintain open communication with educators and families to ensure accurate implementation of dietary needs
- Adjust menus in response to changes in children's health, cultural, or family requirements

Families

- Provide up-to-date information regarding their child's:
 - Health-related dietary restrictions
 - Cultural or religious food preferences
 - Food allergies or medical conditions that require a risk minimisation plan
- Work collaboratively with the service to support any dietary-related risk management
- Review the weekly menu and provide feedback as needed
- If providing food from home:
 - Ensure it is nutritious, suitable for the child's needs, and safe for the shared environment
 - Avoid items that could pose a risk to other children (e.g. allergens)
 - Understand the service is not responsible for serving or reheating home-supplied food

5. Related policies, procedures and resources:

- Enrolment and Orientation
- First Aid
- Medical conditions
- Child Safe Environment
- Incident, injury, illness and Trauma
- [The Australian Dietary Guidelines | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- [Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety | ACECQA](#)

- [Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- [Smiles 4 Miles | dhsv.org.au](#)

- Legislative and Industry Requirements:** [Link here](#) to Legislative Compliance Register
- Consequences of breaching this policy:** All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).
- Policy owner:** The General Manager of Early Years is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.
- Document Control:** Review of this policy will be undertaken every two years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Date	Release Date
4.0	Reviewed	M Rowse	11/7/25	July 25
3.0	Transferred to new template and reviewed	Farryn Burrill	14/10/2024	Nov 2024
2.0	Transferred to new template Changed referencing from YMCA to The Y	Belinda Turner	05/07/2021	July 2021
1.0	Policy reviewed and updated	Children and families leadership team	29/03/2019	May 2019