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POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Food safety

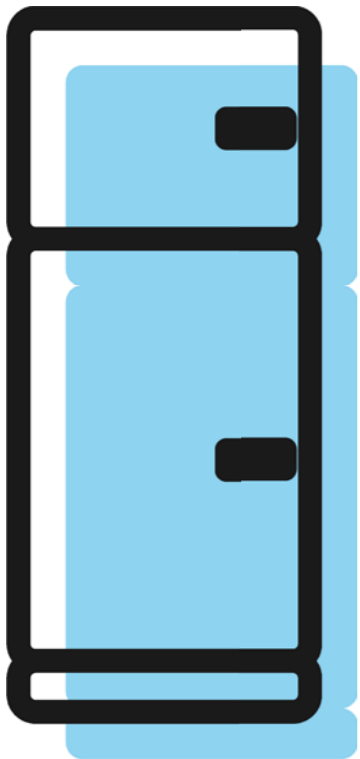
It's vitally important that good food hygiene practices and safety standards are maintained at all times to ensure that harm is not caused to anyone in anyway. Having a robust food safety policy and procedure in place will help you do just that. A good food safety policy should identify precautions to be taken, and the arrangements that are in place to ensure that high standards of health and safety are maintained at all times around all areas of storage, preparation and service of food throughout your setting to ensure you comply with The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended). This Act of Parliament is the statutory obligation to treat food for human consumption in a controlled and managed way. Serious breaches of food laws can result in unlimited fines, your kitchens being closed down and a prison sentence of up to two years.

What should it cover?

Your food safety policy and procedures should include/cover the following areas:

POLICY STATEMENT

Your food safety policy statement should set out how you manage food safety within your setting. It demonstrates your company's attitude towards food safety and the systems you have in place to ensure you comply with food safety legislation. It's important to remember that as a food handler you have a duty to ensure all that you do does not cause harm to anyone through poor practice, lack of knowledge or simply neglect – ignorance is not a defence.



STAFF INDUCTION AND TRAINING

A major requirement by law is that all food handlers must receive appropriate training in food safety practices relevant to their duties. This means that the type of training you need to receive depends on the type of job you do. Legislation specifies that even if a food operative handles only wrapped foods, they must still receive verbal or written instruction.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Bacteria is present in many areas of the human body and we carry a number of food-poisoning bacteria both in and outside our bodies. It is of the utmost importance that food handlers have a very high standard of personal hygiene to prevent contamination. Washing your hands regularly and effectively is the best way to keep the level of hand-based bacteria to a low or zero level. Other aspects of good personal hygiene include wearing a hat or hair net and tying long hair up, covering all cuts, wearing protective clothing and removing jewellery.

PURCHASE AND DELIVERY

Food should only be purchased from reputable suppliers. If food is delivered it is essential that a proper inspection of goods takes place and that you reject any suspect foods to prevent any unsatisfactory products entering your food chain.

STORAGE AND TEMPERATURE CONTROL

The safe storage of food should strictly adhere to guidelines set out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). The FSA guidelines have been thoroughly researched by scientists to determine the best methods for reducing the real threat of food poisoning from unsafe food storage.



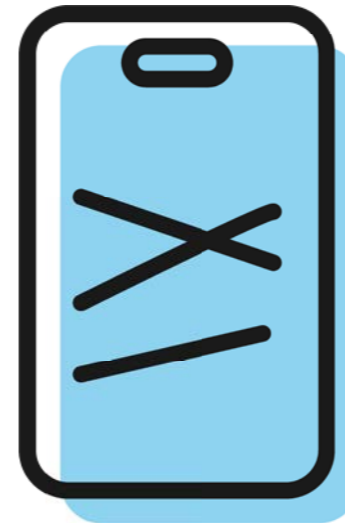
Food preparation

HAZARDS, CONTAMINATION AND POISONING

A food safety hazard is anything that is likely to cause harm. Food is contaminated if it contains something harmful or objectionable. Contamination may occur in a number of ways and can cause illness, injury or make food unfit for human consumption. Care must be taken in all aspects of food production. Contamination can happen at any point during the 'field-to-fork' process. It can occur during growth, production, processing, manufacturing, preparation or cooking. Food must be cooked thoroughly at the correct temperature; this will ensure bacteria is destroyed and remember to never reheat food more than once.

ALLERGENS AND SPECIFIC DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Dietary needs and health considerations also have to feature highly within your policy and have strike protocols in place. You must have processes in place to identify children with specific dietary requirements (children with food allergies or intolerances) and with specific diets that relate to cultural or religious beliefs. Food preparation and service have to have tighter controls in place and it is critical that everyone understands their role and what they must do to keep the children in their



care safe. Food can become contaminated with unlabelled allergens and they may be accidentally introduced into the food at any stage, including by the supplier, during storage, during preparation and during service.

CLEANING

Cleaning and disinfecting food-handling and preparation areas is just as important as the cooking and preparation of the food. The main objective is to reduce bacteria to a safe level, remove conditions compatible to bacteria growth, remove conditions that will attract pests, provide a healthy and pest-free environment for the preparation of clean safe food, and comply with legal and moral obligations to keep food safe.

PEST CONTROL

A food pest is a creature that lives on or in human food. Pests can contaminate food with bacteria and disease, and cause physical contamination from urine, droppings, pet fur, feathers, etc. You must never ignore a potential pest problem: food premises have been, and will be, closed down as a direct result of pest infestation. Prevention is always better than cure.



1m
Cases of food poisoning in the UK each year.

SOURCE: FSA

FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Legislation states that all food businesses must put in place "food safety management procedures". These management procedures should follow the guidelines in the recognised food safety system known as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). HACCP is a system that helps food business operators look at how they handle food and introduces procedures to make sure the food produced is safe to eat. You must ensure that

- a permanent food safety management system is in place,
- all records are to be kept up to date, and
- procedures are reviewed regularly if any changes are experienced to either products or processes.

"All food handlers must receive appropriate training in food safety practices."

As part of routine inspections, environmental health officers will check that the business has an appropriate HACCP-based food safety management system in place.

FOOD COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

It's essential to remember that your setting is classed as a place of business which serves food (even if you don't charge for it directly), and you have a duty to report any food safety breaches to your local authority, who in turn will determine if the Food Standards Agency needs to be notified.

MCW Nursery Support Service Ltd is a family-run business specialising in health and safety, auditing and training for the childcare industry. Visit mcwnss.co.uk



Read Laura's advice on infection control – visit bit.do/TEYinc

ALLERGY AWARENESS

There are 14 allergens that must be identified and labelled on food products...

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten – including wheat (e.g. spelt and khorasan), rye, barley and oats
- Crustaceans – such as prawns, crabs and lobsters
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk
- Molluscs – such as mussels and oysters
- Mustard
- Tree nuts – including almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, brazil nuts, cashews, pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soybeans
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites (if they are at a concentration of more than 10 parts per million)

Remember, it's your responsibility to carry out 'due diligence' and ensure that deliberate or accidental contamination of additional allergens into food doesn't happen.

