

POLICY 4.6 – MEALTIME MANAGEMENT

Purpose

Wonderland Community Services (WCS) recognises that food plays an essential role in supporting the health, wellbeing, and social inclusion of our participants/young persons. Mealtime management is about more than nutrition — it encompasses dignity, enjoyment, safety, and choice.

This policy ensures participants/young persons receive safe, nutritious, and individually tailored meals in a way that supports their rights, preferences, cultural identity, and health needs.

Policy Statement

Participants/young persons have the right to:

- Receive meals that are nutritious, safe, and enjoyable.
- Have mealtimes and food preparation conducted in clean, safe, and dignified environments.
- Receive meals prepared and served in a way that reflects their individual needs, preferences, and cultural background.
- Be supported by staff trained in mealtime management, food safety, and infection control.

WCS commits to:

- Meeting NDIS Mealtime Management Module requirements for assessment, planning, and safe delivery of meals.
- Implementing child-safe practices where individuals are under 18, including modelling healthy eating behaviours and ensuring mealtime supervision.
- Following all relevant state legislation in Queensland and Tasmania for food safety, hygiene, and disability support.

Processes

General

1. All mealtime requirements are documented in the participant's Care Plan by the Client Care Officer and, where relevant, in an individual Mealtime Management Plan.
2. Key Workers and Shift Leaders must ensure all staff on shift are aware of participants'/young person's food preferences, allergies, required textures, and any specialist instructions.
3. Mealtime Management Plans must be accessible at the point of care and adhered to at all times.
4. All staff must obtain a Food Safety Certificate within 3 months of commencing with WCS.
5. Food safety, hygiene standards, and storage practices must comply with the *Food Act 2006 (Qld) / Food Act 2003 (Tas)* and the Food Safety Standards Code.
6. Staff must complete Mealtime Management Training through eTrainu, including safe texture modification, choking response, and dietary risk management.
7. Annual refresher training on mealtime management, infection control, and child-safe food handling is mandatory.
8. Sustainable practices must be followed, including correct food waste disposal and recycling.
9. Participants/young persons should be actively involved in menu planning, food preparation, and clean-up where appropriate.
10. Where complex needs are present (e.g., dysphagia, anaphylaxis, diabetes), support workers must follow written guidance from a qualified health practitioner.

Infection Control

- All staff and participants/young persons must wash and sanitise hands before food handling.
- All surfaces and utensils must be cleaned and sanitised before and after food preparation.
- Unwell individuals must not participate in food preparation; affected utensils must be sanitised in a dishwasher hot cycle.

Short-Term Accommodation, In-Home Care, SIL, and Child Safety

- Meal planning must consider nutritional balance, cultural preferences, and health needs.
- For Child Safety clients, meals should encourage healthy eating habits, avoid “eating on the fly,” and promote positive shared mealtime experiences.
- SIL residents are to be supported in menu planning, budgeting, shopping, safe storage, and food preparation skills development.

Complex Mealtime Management

Where participants have complex needs:

- Assessment by qualified practitioners covering nutrition, swallowing, and seating.
- Annual review of mealtime management plans, or sooner if needs change.
- Staff trained to recognise and respond to choking, allergic reactions, or other mealtime-related risks.
- Menus must be developed in collaboration with the participant, reflecting personal preferences and clinical recommendations.
- Meals must be stored and labelled to ensure safe identification and prevent cross-contamination.

Responsibilities

- **Managers and Client Care Officers** – Oversight, compliance monitoring, and staff training coordination.
- **Support Workers and Key Workers** – Direct implementation of mealtime plans and safe practices.
- **Housekeeping /Facilities Officers** – Kitchen hygiene, safe storage, and waste management.
- **Participants/Guardians** – Contributing to food choices and mealtime planning where possible.

Related Legislation & Standards

- *NDIS Practice Standards 2021 – Mealtime Management Module*
- *NDIS Code of Conduct*
- *Food Act 2006 (Qld) / Food Act 2003 (Tas)*
- *Food Safety Standards – Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld), Child Safe Standards (Qld)*
- *Disability Services Act 2006 (Qld), Disability Services Act 2011 (Tas)*
- *Public Health Act 2005 (Qld), Public Health Act 1997 (Tas)*

DATE	PERSON/S	DETAILS
14.08.2025	Becci Fazldeen	Review and update
31.01.2024	Bronwyn McMullen	Review and update
07.12.2021	Toni Megihan	Policy created