



Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches programme

Guidance on the safe handling and redistribution of surplus lunches

There may be times when your school or kura will have surplus lunches left over, for example when students are absent from school.

Some schools and kura are choosing creative ways to manage surplus lunches, such as sending kai home with their ākonga, sharing with neighbouring schools or early learning centres, or sharing with their wider community.

If your school decides to redistribute unused lunches, it is a good idea to have a plan for how this can be managed, stored and redistributed in ways that help keep people safe.

This guidance provides some information on safe food practices and things to consider if your school wants to develop a plan for managing surplus lunches. There is an example plan attached as a possible starting point.

A food safety procedure

A food safety procedure sets out the processes you have in place to store and redistribute kai safely.

Like any procedure, it is only effective if everyone involved understands what they need to do to keep kai safe and who is responsible for putting the plan into action.

To keep food safe, you need to know what happens to food from when it is first prepared, delivered, arrives on school premises, at lunchtime, and how food is retained and stored after lunch. Therefore, any procedure should cover how food is managed at each stage to keep food safe.

What to cover in food safety procedures

What happens with lunches when they are delivered to or prepared at school?

Talk to your supplier or, if your school makes your own lunches, your kitchen manager. Make sure you understand or know:

For schools and kura outsourcing to a supplier...

If you regularly have too many lunches leftover talk to your supplier. They can help surplus lunches by adjusting your order.

Suppliers can also tell you:

- » which foods should be thrown away after lunch and which lunches can be redistributed
- » share tips on keeping kai safe until sent home
- » provide information on kai with allergens.

Your supplier is responsible for the end to end service of providing healthy lunches to your school. After lunch, how leftovers and surplus lunches are managed is the responsibility of the school or kura. Having a food safety plan will help prevent ākonga and whānau getting sick from unsafe kai.

For schools and kura making their own lunches...

You will find that most of the information in this guide is covered in your Food Control Plan.

- » how long food has been out of refrigeration or hot storage
- » what food can be redistributed and what can not
- » how lunches are distributed to ākonga e.g. what happens when lunches are sent to classrooms.

What happens during lunch time?

Your plan could include how you:

- » ensure good hand washing and hygiene
- » supervise and support ākonga as they eat
- » manage waste food and packaging

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Food safety plan

- » handle surplus lunches.

How are unused lunches collected?

Think about the best way to collect unused lunches, for example:

- » a collection point where surplus lunches are returned – who does this and within what timeframe?
- » what food can be kept and redistributed. You can check this with your supplier.

How are surplus lunches stored and handled?

To handle surplus lunches safely, you will need to make sure you manage food storage and temperature to minimise contamination.

Your food safety procedure could include the steps you take to:

- » make sure you have enough refrigeration space. We can support schools with the one-off purchase of a fridge or freezer to store surplus lunches
- » have appropriate containers to store surplus kai in.
- » log the time lunches went into the fridge and left the fridge for distribution
- » label kai before it is distributed e.g. who it goes to and instructions for reheating or using.

The temperature food is stored at is critical to food safety. Make sure your procedure includes how you will:

- » keep kai at the right temperature to stop bugs from growing quickly
- » chill food at 5°C and under. Cold kai should be eaten within four hours of taking it from the fridge. If it's not going to be eaten within four hours, put it back in the fridge
- » keep food hot over 60°C for up to two hours.
- » reheat food quickly and all the way to the middle until it is steaming hot. If reheated and kai is not eaten within two hours, throw it away.

What steps will you take to prevent contamination?

Your food safety procedure should include:

- » hand hygiene procedures – washing hands before and after handling kai
- » how you will make sure surfaces, utensils and containers are clean before using
- » making sure those who are sick are kept away from handling food

- » how you will keep raw food away from cooked kai or salads.

How do you manage allergens?

Procedures to manage allergens is an important part of a food safety procedure. Include how you will:

- » keep your allergen register up to date
- » talk with ākonga and/or their whānau about their allergens. They know what's best for them.
- » be aware of the 11 common food allergens: sulphites, cereals containing gluten (e.g. wheat), shellfish, eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, soybeans, sesame seeds, tree nuts and lupin
- » keep kai containing allergens apart from other kai
- » separate, pack and label allergen-free kai when it is stored and taken home
- » ensure regular handwashing procedures
- » clean surfaces, utensils and containers before using.

How are surplus lunches redistributed?

Your procedure should include the process you set up for sending food home, for example:

- » what information you provide to those receiving food about how long it has already been refrigerated and its safe handling
- » if you need to use containers and if so how these will these be cleaned and returned

It is useful to nominate a person in charge of handling and distributing surplus lunches so that those receiving food know who to contact.

If something goes wrong

Food must be safe and suitable – you can be held accountable if your food makes people sick.

If things go wrong or there are concerns it is important to have a process for recording and reporting incidents and managing complaints. This should include when your Ministry representative should be notified.

At the end of this document, we have provided a SAMPLE procedure to assist schools with developing their own procedure for the safe handling and distribution of surplus lunches and kai.

Further support

If you have any questions on handling food safety, you can contact your Ministry Ka Ora, Ka Ako regional contact.

Useful links

The Food Act 2014

Information from the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) about the Food Act and what it means.

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/food-act-2014/>

Food Act 2014 food safety toolkit provides guidance and resources to help food businesses understand and meet their obligations under the Food Act 2014. Resources include links to videos, posters, and templates.

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/food-safety-toolkit/food-act-2014-food-safety-toolkit/>

Food control plans

Information from MPI on food control plans

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-business/running-a-food-business/food-control-plans/>

Ka Ora, Ka Ako Food Control Plan developed with MPI for schools making their own lunches.

<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Healthy-School-Lunches-Food-Control-Plan.PDF>

Guidance for hand washing from Health Navigator

<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/healthy-living/h/hand-washing/>

Guide to allergens and learning

www.inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/allergies-and-learning/review-food-safety-policies-and-procedures

Tips for food safety at home from MPI

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/food-safety-home/tips-for-food-safety-at-home/introduction-food-safety-home/>



Procedure for the safe handling and distribution of surplus lunches and kai

Sample School commits to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of students, staff and others receiving surplus school lunches through the *Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches* programme. This plan supports Sample School to ensure food safety best practice.

Food safety procedures

The following steps outline procedures taken to ensure:

- » the safe handling of surplus lunches
- » the safe distribution of surplus lunches to ākongā and their whānau.

We will meet food safety obligations by undertaking the following actions:

- » Ensure that everyone involved with kai understands what they need to do to keep kai safe by distributing food safety procedures to all staff handling food, providing training and displaying procedures clearly on the school kitchen noticeboard.
- » Understand high risk foods and what extra care needs to be taken by referring to guidance from Ministry for Primary Industries.
- » Check with our supplier to understand which foods can be redistributed and which foods cannot.
- » Keep kai at the right temperature by safely storing food until it is to be distributed, refrigerating food at 5°C and under, and recording the time food is refrigerated.
- » Ensure adequate fridge space is available for the safe storage of kai.
- » Maintain an up-to-date allergen register and notify the supplier of any changes immediately.
- » Clearly label kai that is distributed to people with allergens to ensure the right food goes to the right recipient.
- » Preventing contamination by keeping raw and cooked food separate, following recommended guidelines for handwashing, handling food in a hygienic environment, keeping unwell people away from kai.
- » Informing staff, whānau and our community of food safety practices by including regular notices in the community newsletter, sharing guidance from the Ministry for Primary Industries, and providing written instructions to accompany food when appropriate.