Food Management Policy

Date of last review	Sept 2026	**Reviewed by**	Head of Foundation
Date of next review	Sept 2027	**To be reviewed by**	Head of Foundation

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Cambridge United Foundation will handle food safely and responsibly when preparing and/or serving meals at sessions and holiday clubs. Its purpose is to:

- Protect children, families, staff, and volunteers from foodborne illness.
- Reduce the risk of allergic reactions.
- Ensure legal and safe practice in line with UK food safety and allergen regulations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, staff, and volunteers involved in the purchase, storage, preparation, serving, and disposal of food.

3. Food Preparation and Storage

Using prepacked food products helps to make sure that the foods are properly labelled with instructions such as use-by dates, allergen information and storage guidelines.

- When preparing meals, the 4 key safety issues are the 4Cs: cleaning, cooking, chilling and avoiding cross-contamination.
- All food must be prepared in a clean kitchen environment with surfaces disinfected before and after use.
- Handwashing with soap and warm water is required before handling food. Gloves may be used but do not replace handwashing.
- Food must not be prepared by anyone who is ill, particularly with stomach upset or infections.
- Food will be purchased from reputable suppliers only.

It's very important to store food properly to keep it safe. Storing food in sealed containers and at the correct temperature protects it from harmful bacteria, stops objects falling into it, and avoids cross-contamination with other ingredients.

Here are some practical tips for when you're making food for large numbers of people:

- wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- always wash fresh fruit and vegetables before cooking or consumption
- keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate
- do not use food past its use-by date
- always follow cooking instructions
- make sure food is properly cooked before you serve it
- ensure that food preparation areas are suitably cleaned and sanitised after use, and wash any equipment you are using in hot soapy water
- ensure frozen food is safely defrosted in a fridge before you use it
- keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- Perishable food (e.g., cooked meats, cheese, dairy) must be kept refrigerated until use.

4. Food temperature

Food that needs to be chilled, such as sandwiches should be left out of the fridge for the minimum possible time, and never for more than four hours.

After this time, any remaining food should be thrown away or put back in the fridge. If you put the food back in the fridge, don't let it stand around at room temperature when you serve it again. It should be eaten as soon as possible.

5. Sell By, Best Before and Out of Date

Food cannot and will not be sold, redistributed or consumed after the use-by date.

Food with a best before date can be legally sold, redistributed, and consumed after this date, if judged to be of sufficient quality to be donated and made available to be eaten.

This should include a visual inspection, checking for freshness and any damage. In some instances, torn or damaged outer packaging may be acceptable if the integrity of the primary pack is maintained.

Best Before and Use By dates will always be checked. Out-of-date food will not be used.

Leftover or high-risk food will be discarded at the end of each session.

6. Allergens

The specific requirement for managing those with allergens is detailed in the “Allergens Policy”

7. Higher Risk Foods

High-risk foods are those that are ready to eat, require refrigeration, and support the rapid growth of harmful bacteria or the production of toxins. These include cooked sliced meats, dairy products (e.g. soft cheeses), raw milk, raw shellfish, pâté, cooked rice and pasta, prepared salads, and foods containing raw eggs. Extra care will be taken in the storage, handling, and preparation of these items to minimise the risk of foodborne illness and allergen contamination.

8. Risk Assessments

Risk assessments will be carried out and reviewed on a regular basis. All activities that include the preparation and serving of food must complete a risk assessment that is in line with the example templates provided by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) (HSE Assessment templates).

9. Meal Containers

Food in containers is to be of food grade standard. This is packaging intended for multiple uses, such as Tupperware or takeaway boxes.

It is safe to re-use glass and plastic containers, as long as they are free from chips and cracks.

Containers are to be thoroughly cleaned to prevent cross-contamination with germs, allergens and physical contaminants.

If dishwasher safe, a dishwasher is preferable, but as a minimum containers should be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water.

10. Training and Awareness

- Volunteers and staff preparing food will complete the Food Hygiene and Safety Level 2 - Early Years course.
- All staff and volunteers will be briefed on allergen awareness before preparing or serving food at each session.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Head of Foundation is responsible for approving and reviewing this policy.
- The Lead staff member of the session or camp is responsible for implementing this policy, including risk assessment and briefing.
- All volunteers are responsible for following the procedures and reporting any concerns immediately.

12. Emergencies

- If an allergic reaction occurs, staff/volunteers must:
    1. Call 999 immediately.
    2. Administer prescribed medication (e.g., auto-injector) if available and trained to do so.
    3. Inform parents/carers as soon as possible.
- All incidents will be recorded in the Accident/Incident Log.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or circumstances change.

Cambridge United Foundation is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff, volunteers and job applicants. We aim to create a supportive and inclusive working environment in which all individuals can make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, sex, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background or any other inappropriate distinction or characteristic covered by the Equality Act 2010.