



# Guide on Hygiene Practices

## Food Safety of School Meals



### Objective:

This guide serves to remind meal-providing educational institutions about the aspects worthy of attention in food safety and hygiene management for reducing the risk of foodborne illness outbreak on campus to safeguard the health of their students, teachers and other employees.



### Scope of Application:

All educational institutions provide meal service (including schools, nursery, tutorial centres and similar establishments).

## Cautious Selection of Meal Provider



- Choose a hygienically reliable meal provider that has a valid licence issued by the administrative authority;



- Visit the workplace of potential meal provider to make sure its operation complies with hygiene requirements, as in relation to the reliability of food ingredient sources, proper food handling and storage, thorough cooking of food, availability of adequate temperature-controlled equipment, and strict inspection of personal and environmental hygiene by its employees;



- Vehicles used for the transport of lunch meals must be kept clean and met the required hygiene standards (please refer to the 'Hygiene Guidelines on Food Transportation');



- Look into the hygiene aspect of the delivery vehicle, delivery personnel, insulated food carriers and meal boxes upon delivery of the meals. Use a thermometer to measure the food temperature if needed;



- Deliver the food within 30 minutes before meal time at best, and within one hour for delivery involving temperature-holding equipment;



- Shorten the process between transportation and distribution of the meals to control time and keep the food at the right temperature.

## Safety and Hygiene Practices in Meal Preparation

### 1. Source Control of Food Ingredients



- Purchase food ingredients from reliable sources and reputable suppliers;
- Do not accept any spoiled or deteriorated food.

### 2. Storage



- Store raw food separately from cooked food and ready-to-eat food;
- Wrap the food ingredients properly before keeping them in the refrigerator;
- Store chilled food at temperatures below 5°C and frozen food at -18°C or lower. Follow the principle of 'cooked food above raw food' when storing them in the refrigerator.

### 3. Handling and Cooking



- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Use proper methods to defrost food\*;
- Avoid preparing too much food and too early in advance;
- Cook food thoroughly;
- Keep hot food at over 60°C and cold food at below 5°C.

### 4. Meal Display and Distribution



- Shorten the time for meal display and distribution as soon as practicable;
- Place the food and tableware inside appropriate equipment to keep them well-protected;
- Do not leave the cooked food, reheated food and those food already dispensed by serving size in room temperature for more than 2 hours.



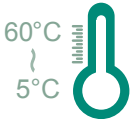
## Scientific Knowledge

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### 【Safe Meals and Nutrition】

Eating safe and nutritious food is the key to sustaining life and promoting good health. The meal selection ought to meet the physical development needs of students and preferably, avoid offering high-risk foods (e.g. pre-cut fruits, sushi, salads, cold dishes, chilled and frozen desserts).



### 【Temperature Danger Zone】

Microorganisms reproduce rapidly at temperature between 5°C and 60°C. This temperature range is known as the 'Temperature Danger Zone', which ready-to-eat food (e.g. cooked food) should not be exposed for too long.



### 【Time Control】

The total time of ready-to-eat food (e.g. cooked food) left at room temperature, including temporary storage, transportation and display, shall not exceed 4 hours, in order to shorten its exposure to the 'Temperature Danger Zone'.



### 【Correct Ways to Defrost Food】\*

- (1) Refrigerator thawing (below 5°C): place the food in the refrigerator compartment in advance.
- (2) Cold water thawing: defrost food under cold running water from the tap or submerge it into cold tap water (change the water every 30 minutes). The thawing should last no longer than 2 hours at best.
- (3) Microwave thawing: turn food over during the thawing process and cook the thawed food immediately.



## Duties of Educational Institutions

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- Everyone plays a part in safeguarding food safety. For educational institutions, they have to pay close attention to any food alerts and announcements issued by the Department of Food Safety of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM). They may visit the 'Food Safety Information' website ([www.foodsafety.gov.mo](http://www.foodsafety.gov.mo)) or the 'Food Safety Information' mobile application (App) to access information on food safety;
- In case of noticing a suspected outbreak of foodborne disease on campus, the educational institutions are obliged to notify IAM about the situation;
- Organise trainings on food hygiene, personal hygiene and environmental hygiene for staff as a regular basis, and provide appropriate technical guidance and support.