

Food Hygiene Policy

St Peter's, Colchester

Adopted by the PCC: [tbc]

Review date: [3 years]

Policy owner: The Parochial Church Council

1. Purpose

This policy explains how St Peter's seeks to ensure that food and drink provided on church premises is safe to consume.

The Parochial Church Council has responsibility for the governance and oversight of St Peter's, including health and safety, risk management, food hygiene, safeguarding, premises use, volunteers and church activities.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we seek to be faithful in all that we say and do. That includes offering hospitality with care, protecting those who may be vulnerable, acting responsibly, and ensuring that food and drink are prepared, served and stored safely.

This policy is intended to help staff, volunteers, kitchen users and activity leaders understand and follow appropriate food hygiene arrangements at St Peter's.

2. Scope

This policy applies to food and drink prepared, stored, served or provided on St Peter's premises or as part of St Peter's activities.

This may include:

- tea, coffee, squash, biscuits and refreshments after services;
- refreshments at church groups, courses, meetings and events;
- food provided at special events;
- food prepared or served in the church kitchen or hall kitchen;
- food stored temporarily on church premises;
- food brought in by volunteers for church activities;
- food served to children, young people, vulnerable adults, visitors or members of the public;
- food hygiene arrangements connected with church-led hospitality.

This policy applies, as relevant, to:

- staff;

- volunteers;
- catering team members;
- Ministry Area Leaders;
- event organisers;
- kitchen users;
- churchwardens;
- PCC members;
- those overseeing activities where food or drink is provided.

External hirers of the church hall or church premises who serve food are responsible for their own food hygiene arrangements, policies and legal compliance. St Peter's may still provide premises-related information and may require hirers to follow relevant conditions of hire.

3. Christian foundation

Hospitality is an important part of church life and Christian service. It should be offered warmly, generously and safely.

The Apostle Peter writes:

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling."
 – 1 Peter 4:9, ESV

Food hygiene is one practical way of loving others well. It helps ensure that hospitality is safe, trustworthy and considerate, especially for children, older people, pregnant women, those with allergies, and those with health conditions or vulnerability.

4. Policy statement

The PCC will seek to ensure that all food and drink provided at St Peter's premises is safe to consume.

This will be achieved by:

- assessing food hygiene risks at critical control points;
- appointing or recognising appropriate volunteers to take particular responsibilities;
- giving guidance to kitchen users on kitchen equipment, processes and procedures;
- recording temperature monitoring and cleaning activities where required;
- keeping appropriate training records;
- reviewing food-related activities at regular intervals;
- maintaining facilities to an appropriate standard;
- providing training or instruction appropriate to the level of risk;
- ensuring that relevant volunteers receive and acknowledge this policy;
- circulating regular reminders of good food hygiene practice to kitchen users.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The PCC

The PCC has overall responsibility for ensuring appropriate food hygiene arrangements are in place.

The PCC may delegate practical responsibilities to staff, officers, catering leads, activity leaders, Ministry Area Leaders or volunteers, but retains overall governance responsibility.

5.2 Church Administrator and responsible leaders

The Church Administrator and relevant responsible leaders should support the practical implementation of this policy, including as appropriate:

- keeping food hygiene records organised;
- keeping records of training or policy acknowledgement;
- ensuring kitchen notices and instructions are available;
- helping communicate food hygiene expectations to volunteers and kitchen users;
- receiving reports of concerns, faults or accidents;
- arranging maintenance or reporting premises issues;
- helping ensure supplies are available.

5.3 Catering team

The catering team provides support for serving tea, coffee and biscuits after Sunday services. Other special events in the life of the church may require ad hoc volunteers, who should be given appropriate instruction and supervision.

Those who are part of the catering team should:

- receive an induction in the use of relevant kitchen equipment from the catering lead or other competent person;
- ensure that kitchen use for events they oversee is in accordance with this policy;
- record fridge temperatures where required;
- complete cleaning logs where required;
- monitor the storage of food in the kitchen;
- dispose of food that is not stored, labelled or dated correctly;
- ensure good hygiene practice is followed;
- ensure allergen information is available where relevant;
- report problems, faults, accidents or concerns promptly.

5.4 Kitchen users and volunteers

All kitchen users and volunteers involved in food or drink should:

- follow this policy and any kitchen guidance;
- wash hands thoroughly before handling food or drink;

- keep the kitchen clean and tidy;
- use equipment only where they have been shown how to use it safely;
- report accidents, concerns, faults or hygiene issues promptly;
- avoid handling food when unwell;
- follow allergen and labelling arrangements;
- clean surfaces and equipment after use;
- dispose of waste properly;
- respect any instructions given by the catering lead, Church Administrator or responsible person.

6. Training, instruction and records

The PCC will seek to ensure that appropriate instruction and training are provided according to the level of food hygiene risk.

For best practice, an appropriate number of church volunteers should hold a current Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate, normally less than three years old.

All catering volunteers should receive a copy of this policy and sign to acknowledge that they have read it and understood it.

A regular reminder of good practice should be circulated to kitchen users.

Appropriate records should be kept of:

- food hygiene training;
- policy acknowledgement by catering volunteers;
- fridge temperature monitoring where required;
- cleaning logs where required;
- significant incidents or concerns;
- any relevant maintenance or equipment issues.

7. Children and kitchen access

Children under the age of 14 should not enter or use the kitchen at any time.

Young people aged 14 or over should only use the kitchen where this is specifically authorised, supervised, risk-assessed where appropriate, and consistent with safeguarding and health and safety requirements.

Children and young people should not be placed at unnecessary risk from hot liquids, sharp items, cleaning products, electrical equipment, heavy items, slips, trips or confined kitchen space.

8. Personal hygiene and illness

Anyone involved in food or drink preparation or service must maintain good personal hygiene.

Anyone entering the kitchen must wash their hands thoroughly on entry.

Hand sanitising gel must not be used as a substitute for frequent handwashing.

People must not assist in the kitchen or handle food if they are suffering from:

- diarrhoea;
- vomiting;
- a stomach upset;
- symptoms of infectious illness likely to affect food safety;
- heavy coughs or colds where food could be contaminated.

Those who have had diarrhoea or vomiting must not assist in the kitchen until at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed.

Anyone with cuts or abrasions should not handle food unless the wound is minor and covered with a suitable blue plaster or dressing.

A first-aid kit, including blue plasters, is available in the cupboard at the front entrance of the church. Any accident must be recorded in the accident book and reported as required under St Peter's Health and Safety Policy.

9. Handwashing

Everyone entering the kitchen must wash their hands thoroughly before preparing, handling or serving food and drink.

Hands should also be washed:

- after using the toilet;
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose;
- after touching the face, hair or phone;
- after handling waste;
- after cleaning;
- after handling raw or potentially contaminated food;
- before returning to food preparation after any interruption.

Handwashing should use warm water, soap and appropriate drying facilities.

Sanitising hand gels may be used as an additional precaution where appropriate, but they must not replace proper handwashing.

10. Equipment and supplies

Before using the following equipment, users must receive instruction from a trained or competent member of the catering team or other authorised person:

- coffee machine;
- dishwasher.

Equipment should be used only for its intended purpose and in accordance with instructions given.

The following supplies should normally be available in the kitchen for users:

- disposable cloths and tea towels;
- detergents and cleaning supplies;
- tea, coffee and milk;
- biscuits.

Any missing supplies, faulty equipment, damaged items, unsafe electrical equipment or other concerns should be reported to the Church Administrator or responsible person.

11. Food storage and labelling

Food should be stored safely and appropriately.

The catering team or responsible person should monitor food stored in the kitchen and may dispose of food that is not stored or labelled correctly.

Food should not be used if:

- it is past its use-by date;
- it appears spoiled, contaminated or unsafe;
- it has not been stored correctly;
- it is unlabelled and the contents or date are unclear;
- allergen information is unavailable where needed;
- there is doubt about whether it is safe.

Perishable food should be stored at appropriate temperatures.

Fridge temperatures should be recorded where required. Concerns about fridge temperatures or storage conditions should be reported promptly.

12. Allergens and information for those eating

Clear information must be available for those eating, showing what food is being served and clearly highlighting any of the 14 recognised allergens which are present or may be present.

Additional information about ingredients should be available on request.

Where food has been brought in from home or prepared by volunteers, the person providing the food should supply accurate ingredient and allergen information.

If allergen information is not known, this should be made clear. Food should not be described as “free from” an allergen unless this can be stated with confidence.

Those serving food should not guess about ingredients or allergens.

Allergen information is especially important where food is served to children, young people, vulnerable adults or members of the public.

13. Cleaning and hygiene after kitchen use

At the end of all activities using the kitchen:

- all items used must be washed up, either using the dishwasher or in hot soapy water;
- clean items should be dried and put away;
- all surfaces should be left clear;
- surfaces should be wiped using hot soapy water and then anti-bacterial spray;
- spills should be cleaned promptly;
- food waste should be disposed of properly;
- equipment should be left clean and safe;
- the kitchen should be left tidy and ready for the next user.

Kitchen tea towels should be taken home and laundered at at least 60°C, then returned as soon as possible.

Cleaning logs should be completed where required.

14. Waste disposal

All waste must be disposed of properly.

The recycling bin may be used for clean:

- glass;
- plastic bottles and cans;
- card;
- paper.

General waste should be placed in the general waste bin provided.

Waste should not be allowed to build up in the kitchen or create a hygiene, smell, pest, trip or obstruction risk.

15. Events and ad hoc volunteers

Some church events may require additional or ad hoc volunteers to help with food and drink.

Where this happens, the event organiser or catering lead should ensure that volunteers are given appropriate instruction and supervision.

This should include, as relevant:

- handwashing;
- illness exclusion;
- safe use of equipment;
- cleaning arrangements;
- allergen information;
- waste disposal;
- safe serving of hot drinks;
- accident reporting;
- kitchen access rules;
- what to do if unsure.

Ad hoc volunteers should not be asked to undertake tasks beyond their competence.

16. Hirers and external users

All hirers of the church hall or church premises who serve food are responsible for their own food hygiene policies, procedures, risk assessments and legal compliance.

St Peter's may provide hirers with relevant premises information, including:

- kitchen access arrangements;
- cleaning expectations;
- waste disposal arrangements;
- emergency information;
- accident reporting requirements;
- any restrictions on use.

Hirers must leave the kitchen clean, tidy and safe after use.

Where a hirer's food-related activity creates concern, St Peter's may raise the matter with the hirer, restrict use of kitchen facilities, require additional assurances, or decline future hire where appropriate.

17. Accidents, incidents and concerns

Accidents must be recorded in the accident book and reported in accordance with St Peter's Health and Safety Policy.

Food hygiene concerns, equipment faults, fridge temperature concerns, illness after eating, allergen concerns, pest concerns, cleaning issues, accidents, near misses or unsafe kitchen practice should be reported promptly.

Depending on the matter, reports may be made to:

- the catering lead;
- the Church Administrator;
- the Health and Safety Officer;
- the Vicar;
- the churchwardens;
- the relevant Ministry Area Leader;
- the PCC or relevant governance group;
- external authorities where required.

18. Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside, where applicable:

- Health and Safety Policy;
- Risk Assessment Procedure;
- Governance and Risk Management Policy;

- Risk Register;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Manual Handling Policy;
- Lone Worker Policy;
- Fire Risk Assessment;
- Volunteer Policy;
- Volunteer Agreement;
- Ministry Role Descriptions;
- Hire Terms and Conditions;
- Accident and incident reporting arrangements;
- relevant risk assessments;
- relevant statutory, insurer or professional guidance.

19. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the PCC every three years, or sooner if required by changes in law, guidance, insurance requirements, incidents, parish practice, building use, staffing, governance need or risk assessment.

Food hygiene arrangements should be reviewed sooner where there has been an incident, illness concern, allergen concern, equipment failure, significant change in kitchen use, change in catering arrangements or repeated concern.

The PCC is responsible for ensuring that this policy remains practical, proportionate and consistent with St Peter's wider health and safety and risk management arrangements.

Kitchen Food Hygiene Summary

This summary is for display in the kitchen. It is not a substitute for the full Food Hygiene Policy.

1. Basic rule

Food and drink served at St Peter's must be safe to consume.

Kitchen users must follow good hygiene practice, use equipment safely, keep the kitchen clean, provide allergen information, and report concerns promptly.

2. Who may use the kitchen?

- Children under 14 must not enter or use the kitchen.
- Young people aged 14+ may only use the kitchen if authorised and supervised.
- Kitchen users must follow instructions from the catering lead, Church Administrator or responsible person.
- The coffee machine and dishwasher must only be used by those who have been shown how to use them safely.

3. Before starting

Before preparing or serving food or drink:

- wash your hands thoroughly;
- put bags and coats away – hooks are provided in the kitchen store;
- check surfaces are clean;
- check food is in date and safe to use;
- check allergen information is available;
- check equipment is safe and clean;
- do not use the kitchen if you are unwell.

4. Illness, cuts and first aid

Do not assist in the kitchen or handle food if you have:

- diarrhoea or vomiting;
- stomach upset;
- symptoms of infectious illness likely to affect food safety;
- heavy coughs or colds which could contaminate food.

After diarrhoea or vomiting, do not assist in the kitchen until at least **48 hours after symptoms have passed**.

Cuts or abrasions must be covered with a blue plaster or dressing before handling food.

A first-aid kit, including blue plasters, is available in the cupboard at the front entrance of the church.

Record accidents using the Accident, Incident & Near Miss form. If first aid has been administered, a record must also be written in the accident book.



5. Handwashing

Wash hands thoroughly:

- when entering the kitchen;
- before handling food or drink;
- after using the toilet;
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose;
- after touching your face, hair or phone;
- after handling waste;
- after cleaning;
- after handling raw or potentially contaminated food.

Hand gel is not a substitute for proper handwashing.

6. Allergens and food information

Clear information must be available for those eating.

Food information must identify any of the 14 recognised allergens which are present or may be present.

Ingredient information should be available on request.

Do not guess about ingredients or allergens. Do not describe food as “free from” an allergen unless you are sure. If allergen information is unknown, say so clearly.

7. Food storage

Food must be stored safely.

Do not use food if:

- it is past its use-by date;
- it appears spoiled or unsafe;
- it has not been stored correctly;
- it is unlabelled and the contents or date are unclear;
- allergen information is unavailable where needed;
- you are unsure whether it is safe.

The catering team or responsible person may dispose of food that is not stored or labelled correctly.

Record fridge temperatures where required.

Report fridge or storage concerns promptly.

8. During kitchen use

- Keep surfaces clear and clean.
- Avoid cross-contamination.
- Clean spills promptly.
- Keep hot drinks and sharp items away from children and visitors.
- Use the dishwasher, coffee machine and other equipment only if you have been shown how.
- Report faults, damaged equipment, missing supplies or hygiene concerns.
- Do not leave waste, food or dirty items to build up.

9. At the end

Before leaving the kitchen:

- wash up all items used, either in the dishwasher or in hot soapy water;
- dry and put items away;
- leave surfaces clear;
- wipe surfaces with hot soapy water and anti-bacterial spray;
- dispose of food waste properly;
- put clean recycling in the recycling bin;
- put general waste in the general waste bin;
- complete cleaning logs where required;
- take kitchen tea towels home to launder at at least 60°C and return them as soon as possible.

10. Waste and recycling

Recycling bins: clean glass, plastic bottles and cans, card and paper.

General waste: use the general waste bin provided.

Do not leave waste where it creates smell, pest risk, trip hazard or obstruction.

11. Problems, accidents or concerns

Report promptly:

- accidents or injuries;
- suspected food poisoning or illness after eating;
- allergen concerns;
- fridge temperature concerns;
- equipment faults;
- cleaning problems;
- pest concerns;
- unsafe practice;
- missing supplies;
- kitchen damage or hazards.

Report to the catering lead, Church Administrator, Health and Safety Officer, Vicar or churchwardens as appropriate.

12. Hirers

Hirers serving food are responsible for their own food hygiene arrangements and must leave the kitchen clean, tidy and safe.