SAFETY FIRST

Kitchen safety and hygiene
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KITCHEN CLASSROOM SAFETY AND HYGIENE
Schools are responsible for the overall safety of pupils whilst in their care.
Special precautions must be exercised by all adults and children when preparing, handling, cooking and storing food at school.
Kitchen and food safety is about managing everything that happens in the food area or classroom to reduce the risk of burns, cuts, falls, food poisoning and food allergy or intolerance. Primary teachers in charge of food activities and food technology teaching must think about, carry out and manage food-safety procedures and check that they are operable.

Parental consent in writing should be obtained for every child who is to participate in food-preparation and cooking activities, which includes permission to handle ingredients and equipment (including knives), and tasting and eating food. Written consents should be filed and available for inspection by anyone teaching or supervising food activities.

All teachers and supervising adults must be informed of any pupils’ suspected or known food allergies or intolerances. Pupils with allergies or intolerances - and especially those whose allergies may require medication - should be provided where possible with alternative ingredients. However, in severe cases it may be necessary to exclude certain ingredients altogether or, at worst, to exclude the pupil participant from the specific cooking activity. A qualified school first aid representative should be on hand to administer medication, if needed.

If there is any doubt regarding the safety of any pupil or adult participating in specific food activities, the school is entitled to reserve the right to decline their participation.

The risk assessment applies to all individuals participating in the cooking activity, whether they be teacher or supervising adult, visitor/observer or pupils.

The following Focus on Food risk assessment pro forma is purely a sample. It draws attention to hazards commonly encountered within the primary classroom. Of course, cooking facilities, their location, set-up and use will vary from school to school.

It is vital that schools devise their own risk assessment to take into account other hazards (not covered in the sample risk assessment) that are identified and to ensure that precautions and control measures are documented before cooking work begins.

Some Education Authorities have their own food safety rules and guidelines. It is wise to cross-check with your own Authority’s risk assessments before implementing the Focus on Food sample risk assessment.
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<td>2. KNIVES ALWAYS TO BE STORED IN THE SHEATHS PROVIDED.</td>
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<td>3. ENSURE KNIVES ARE STORED WHERE THEY CAN BE EASILY SEEN WHEN BEING REMOVED FROM DRAW OR CUPBOARD.</td>
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<td>1. EQUIPMENT TO BE HOT-WASHED TO REMOVE FOOD PARTICLES AND THOROUGHLY DRIED BEFORE STORAGE.</td>
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<td>2. CHOPPING BOARDS AND ESPECIALLY PLASTIC BOWLS TO BE SCRUBBED WITH HOT WATER, DETERGENT, AND AIR-DRIED.</td>
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<td>3. ENSURE FOOD IS STORED IN A CLEAN AND DRY PLACE, AND THAT WET OR DIRTY EQUIPMENT HAS NOT BEEN PUT AWAY WET OR DIRTY.</td>
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<td>4. STORAGE AREAS TO BE WIPE-D WITH A CLEAN CLOTH AND HOT SOAPY WATER AFTER EACH USE.</td>
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<td>5. FOOD, CLEANING AGENTS AND CLOTHS, INCLUDING TEATOWELS NEVER TO BE STORED WITH FOOD EQUIPMENT.</td>
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**HAZARD** | **WHO COULD BE HARMED** | **RISK LEVEL** | **PRECAUTIONS AND CONTROL MEASURES IN THE COOKING AREA OR COOKIT STORAGE AREA** | **CHECK BY TICKING** | **NOTE HERE ANY FURTHER ACTION** |
---|---|---|---|---|---|
**TRIPPING, SLIPPING, FALLING** | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | MEDIUM | 1. FLOOR AREA TO BE EVEN AND CLEAR OF EXTRANEOUS FURNITURE, WIRES, BOXES OR OTHER ITEMS LIKELY TO CAUSE TRIPPING. |                |                             |
<p>|                              |                             |            | 2. FLOOR TO BE DRY AND CLEANED OF FOOD OR OTHER MATTER LIKELY TO CAUSE SLIPPING. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 3. COOKING AREA TO BE ACCESSIBLE ONLY TO CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE ACTIVITY AND WHO ARE UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 4. FLOOR TO BE DRY AND CLEANED OF FOOD OR OTHER MATTER LIKELY TO CAUSE SLIPPING. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 5. APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR TO BE WORN (LOW-HEELED, CLOSED-IN SHOES, LACES TIED). |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 6. WHEELCHAIR AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE RESTRICTED MOVEMENT TO BE CAREFULLY POSITIONED. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 7. TABLE HEIGHT(S) TO BE APPROPRIATE TO PUPIL HEIGHT. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 8. STUDENT TO BE SECURED TO CHAIR OR STOOL. |                |                             |
| <strong>FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY CLOTHING</strong> | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | LOW | 1. ALL PARTICIPANTS TO WEAR A CLEAN APRON RESERVED SOLELY FOR FOOD PREPARATION. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 2. PVC-COATED APRONS TO BE CLEANED WITH HOT SOAPY WATER BEFORE AND AFTER USE. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 3. APRONS TO BE PUT ON ONLY IN THE COOKING AREA AND ALWAYS REMOVED WHEN LEAVING IT FOR ANY REASON. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 4. LONG SLEEVES TO BE ROLLED UP AND SCARVES AND OTHER ACCESSORIES (EXCEPT FOR RELIGIOUS HEAD WEAR) TO BE REMOVE. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 5. OUTDOOR CLOTHING, COATS OR SUIT JACKETS NEVER TO BE WORN OR STORED IN THE FOOD-PREPARATION AREA. |                |                             |
| <strong>FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY HAIR, NAIL POLISH, RINGS AND BACTERIA ON HANDS</strong> | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | LOW | 1. LONG/MEDIUM LENGTH HAIR TO BE FASTENED BACK USING ELASTIC BANDS AND CLIPS OR ANY WAYS TO BE SECURED AWAY FROM FACE. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 2. ANY NAIL POLISH WORN BY EITHER ADULTS OR CHILDREN TO BE REMOVED. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 3. PRIOR TO FOOD HANDLING, HANDS TO BE WASHED (AT HAND WASH STATION) USING HOT WATER AND SOAP AND DRIED WITH PAPER TOWELS. |                |                             |
| <strong>FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY CUTS, SORES, BOILS AND DRESSINGS</strong> | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | LOW TO MEDIUM | 1. BLUE PLASTERS TO BE APPLIED TO ANY CUTS OR SORES. |                |                             |
|                              |                             |            | 2. MORE EXTENSIVE EXISTING INJURIES TO BE COVERED WITH VINYL OR LATEX (PLASTERS OR GLOVES). |                |                             |</p>
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<td><strong>CAUSED BY BACTERIA SPREAD BY ILLNESS</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW TO MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. NO PARTICIPANT FEELING SICK OR UNWELL TO BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE COOKING AREA.</strong> <strong>2. NO PARTICIPANT SUPPILING OR RECENTLY RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS OR DIARRHOEA TO BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE COOKING AREA.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW TO MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. SURFACES TO BE WIPED WITH A DISPOSABLE CLOTH. 2. SCHOOL TABLES/SURFACES TO BE COATED WITH A CLEAN PLASTIC SHEET TO BE KEPT DELICATE FOR THE PURPOSE. 3. NO OUTDOOR/INDOOR CLOTHING, BAGS, BRIEFCASES, FILES, BOOKS OR BOXES TO BE PLACED ON THE COOKING SURFACE. 4. ALL EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING CUTLERY TRAYS AND ALL LARGE AND SMALL ITEMS, TO BE CLEANED THROUGHOUT BEFORE AND AFTER THE COOKING ACTIVITY. 5. CHOPPING BOARDS TO BE HOT-WASHED AND AIR-DRIED. 6. COOKED AND RAW INGREDIENTS TO BE KEPT SEPARATELY, BOTH IN STORAGE AND IN PREPARATION.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CONTAMINATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAUSED BY BACTERIA CONTRACTED THROUGH SOIL OR OTHER GROWING MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW TO MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. COOKING APRONS NEVER TO BE WORN WHEN PICKING OR HARVESTING PRODUCE. 2. HANDS TO BE WASHED THOROUGHLY AFTER PICKING OR HARVESTING AND WASHING PRODUCE. 3. SOIL AND OTHER GROWING MEDIA TO BE REMOVED THROUGH WASHING PRIOR TO FOOD PREPARATION. 4. OPEN WOUNDS TO BE COVERED BEFORE HANDLING SOIL-COVERED PRODUCE.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FOOD</strong></td>
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<td><strong>CAUSED BY BACTERIA CONTRACTED THROUGH WASTE</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td><strong>LOW TO MEDIUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. WASTE BOWLS USED ON FOOD PREPARATION TABLES TO BE EMBRACED PROMPTLY WHEN FULL. 2. LUMPED BLUE-FROZEN WASTE (OPEN TINS/CANS OR BROKEN/SHATTERED EQUIPMENT) TO BE WRAPPED, LABELLED AND PROMPTLY AND SAFELY DISPOSED OF. 3. WASTE BINS TO BE LINED FULL BAGS TO BE PLACED AND SEALED AND PROMPTLY AND SAFELY DISPOSED OF. 4. FOOD WASTE BINS TO BE WASHED AND DISINFECTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER EMPTYING. 5. FOOD WASTE BINS TO BE KEPT FOR FOOD ONLY AND NEVER TO BE USED FOR OTHER WASTE. 6. ACCIDENTAL SPILLAGES OF FOOD (LIQUID OR SOLID) TO BE WIPED, SWEPT OR VACUUMED, AND THE FLOOR WASHED BEFORE AND AFTER (NEVER DURING) COOKING ACTIVITIES. 7. BAGS AND OUTDOOR CLOTHING NEVER TO BE PLACED ON WORK SURFACES.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FOOD</strong></td>
<td><strong>CONTAMINATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>CAUSED BY BACTERIA CONTRACTED THROUGH OUTSIDE SOURCES</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADULTS (STAFF AND ASSISTANT(S)), CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td><strong>MODERATE</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. ALL ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS) TO PROVIDE DETAILED INFORMATION OF ANY KNOWN OR SUSPECTED ALLERGIES OR INTOLERANCES TO FOODSTUFFS OR CLEANING AGENTS. THE INFORMATION MUST BE IN WRITING AND READILY AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION. 2. PARENTAL CONSENT TO BE OBTAINED AND READY AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION FOR EVERY PARTICIPATING CHILD TO HANDLE, TASTE AND CONSUME FOODSTUFFS AND TO USE COOKING EQUIPMENT. 3. PUPILS WHO MAY REQUIRE MEDICATION DURING COOKING ACTIVITIES TO BE IDENTIFIED AND AN AUTHORIZED SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE TO BE ON HAND TO ADMINISTER THAT MEDICATION, IF REQUIRED. 4. ALTERNATIVE FOOD STUFFS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR ANY PUPILS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES OR INTOLERANCES IN SOME CASES IT MAY BE NEEDED TO EXCLUDE CERTAIN INGREDIENTS FROM THE RECIPES OR, IN EXTREME CASES TO EXCLUDE THE PARTICIPANT FROM THE COOKING ACTIVITY. 5. DONATIONS OF FOOD FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES TO BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF THERE IS CONFIRMATION THAT THEY ARE SAFE TO CONSUME AND HAVE BEEN KEPT SAFE AND CLEAN.</strong></td>
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* N.B. IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT REGARDING THE SAFETY OF ANY INDIVIDUAL DURING THE COOKING ACTIVITY, THE SCHOOL MAY RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DECLINE HIS/HER PARTICIPATION IN COOKING ACTIVITIES.*
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| DANGERS FROM HEAT, FIRE AND ELECTRICAL HAZARDS | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | LOW TO MEDIUM | 1. FLAMMABLE MATERIALS NOT TO BE STORED OR STAKED CLOSE TO COOKERS.  
2. COOKER/HOB AND OVEN TO BE OPERATED ONLY BY ADULT IN CHARGE.  
3. MATCHES OR OTHER FIRE LIGHTING MATERIALS NOT TO BE USED TO LIGHT COOKERS OR OTHER EQUIPMENT.  
4. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES TO BE IN PLACE AND UNDERSTOOD BY ALL PARTICIPANTS.  
5. EMERGENCY EXITS TO BE KEPT CLEAR AND OBSTRUCTION-FREE AT ALL TIMES.  
6. ASSEMBLY POINT TO BE IDENTIFIED AND ALL PARTICIPANTS MADE AWARE OF IT.  
7. A FIRE BLANKET AND SUITABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHER TO BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES.  
8. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDING ELECTRIC PANS, SANDWICH TOASTERS, FOOD PROCESSORS, BLENDERS (INCLUDING 'STICK' BLENDERS) NOT TO BE OPERATED BY PUPILS.  
9. ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT TO BE CERTIFIED FOR SAFE USE BY AN AUTHORIZED PERSON OR BODY.  
10. SUSPECTED MALFUNCTIONING EQUIPMENT NOT TO BE USED. | | |
| BURNS FROM OVENS, EQUIPMENT LIQUIDS OR FOOD STUFFS | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | LOW TO MEDIUM | 1. OVEN GLOVES TO BE USED TO CARRY HOT FOOD PANS/TINS.  
2. OVEN SHELVES TO BE ADJUSTED BEFORE PUTTING IT INSIDE THE OVEN.  
3. PAN-HANDLES TO BE RETURNED INWARDS BUT NOT OVER HOT HOBS.  
4. LIGHTS ONLY TO CARRY STIR AND SERVE HOT LIQUIDS.  
5. HOT FOOD OR LIQUIDS NEVER TO BE LEFT UNATTENDED AND ALWAYS PLACED OUT OF REACH.  
6. FOOD FOR TASTING TO BE WARM, NOT HOT AND TEMPERATURE-TESTED BEFORE CHILDREN TASTE IT.  
7. FRUIT TO BE CARRIED OUT ONLY BY ADULTS AND WELL AWAY FROM CHILDREN.  
8. CHILDREN TO BE KEPT WELL AWAY FROM COOKERS AND OVENS. | | |
| CUTS FROM KNIVES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING GRATERS | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN | MEDIUM | 1. ALL SHARP KNIVES AND OTHER SHARP EQUIPMENT (E.G. SKEWERS) TO BE LOCKED IN AN APPROPRIATE PLACE WHEN NOT IN USE.  
2. KNIVES TO BE COUNTED "OUT" AND "IN." SHARP KNIVES NEVER TO BE LEFT OUT DURING SETUP PREPARATION, IN READINESS FOR LESSONS OR AFTER USE.  
3. APPROPRIATE TYPE AND SIZE OF KNIVES TO BE SELECTED IN ADVANCE, ACCORDING TO THE AGE OF CHILDREN.  
4. "BRIDGE" AND "CLAW" SAFE CUTTING TECHNIQUES TO BE TAUGHT AND SUPERVISED.  
5. CHOPPING BOARDS ALWAYS TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH KNIVES.  
6. KNIVES ALWAYS TO BE WASHED UP SEPARATELY AND NEVER LEFT IN THE WASHING-UP BOWL OR SINK.  
7. GLASS BOWLS NEVER TO BE CARRIED OR WASHED BY PUPILS.  
8. PUPILS WITH CERTAIN BEHAVIOURAL DIFFICULTIES TO BE PRECLUDED FROM USING KNIVES. ADVICE FROM SPECIALIST OR HEADTEACHER TO BE SOUGHT ON DOUBTFUL CASES.  
9. PUPILS TO BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES DURING ALL COOKING ACTIVITIES. | | |
| Cuts or Injury FROM ELECTRICAL PROCESSORS AND BLENDERS, INCLUDING HAND ('STICK') BLENDERS | ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS) | MEDIUM | 1. (PUPILS NEVER TO BE PERMITTED TO HANDLE OR OPERATE THE TYPE OF EQUIPMENT.)  
2. EQUIPMENT TO BE USED ONLY BY COMPETENT ADULTS AND ONLY FOLLOWING PERUSAL OF APPLIANCE INSTRUCTION BOOK.  
3. BLADES OR BLADES NEVER TO BE LEFT IN THE WASHING-UP BOWLS OR UNATTENDED – TO BE WASHED UP IMMEDIATELY AND PLACED IN STORAGE BOX IN A SECURE PLACE.  
4. ALL BULTS TO BE STORED IN A SAFE PLACE AFTER USE. | | |
| CHOKING ON SMALL PIECES OF FOOD OR INHALATION OF SMALL INGREDIENTS | CHILDREN | MEDIUM | 1. TASTING SESSIONS OF SMALL PIECES OF FRUIT OR OTHER SMALL INGREDIENTS TO BE CONDUCTED IN A CALM, UNHURRIED MANNER AND SUPERVISED.  
2. PUPILS TO BE ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW TEACHER GUIDANCE ON TASTING AND EATING SLOWLY.  
3. PUPILS NEVER TO BE EAT FOODS FROM CUPPED HAND WITH HEAD THROWN BACK.  
4. PUPILS TO BE TREATED AS EAT FOOD ONLY AT THE INVITATION OF THE TEACHER OR ADULT IN CHARGE. | | |
COOKING

1. Before touching any food, hands must be washed in hot, soapy water and dried with a paper towel. The towel must be clippily disposed of.

2. Every cooking item must be kept clean. Both before and after cooking, work surfaces must be wiped down with a new disposable cleaning cloth and hot, soapy water. The board must be rinsed well and air-dried in a place free from flies or other insects.

3. Protective table coverings (such as those used in the primary classroom) must be wiped thoroughly before and after use. The protective table coverings must not be used for any other activities (such as art or science work).

4. Dishes and equipment must be washed thoroughly in hot, soapy water. A disposable cloth and a washing-up brush are to be used to d into food particles. Take care to ensure that all items are thoroughly clean and that food particles are not left in such things as blenders or baked on trays. Only a spotlessly clean teatowel may be used.

5. Clean equipment must be put away in well-cleaned cupboards and drawers. Testswells may not simply be dried for re-use; they must be laundered in a washing-machine on a hot washing cycle.

6. Good care must be taken of chopping boards. After use, they must be scrubbed on both sides with hot, soapy water. The board must be rinsed well and air-dried in a place free from flies or other insects.

7. Teachers and pupils must wear clean aprons. (Disposable plastic aprons are not recommended; they are flimsy, tear easily and melt on contact with heat.) Cloth aprons must be machine-washed on a hot cycle. (Durable, wipe-clean plastic aprons may be worn; but check Local Authority regulations first.)

8. Children must wash their hands under supervision at a hand-wash basin or sink (not the food-preparation sink) in hot, soapy water. Hands should be dried with disposable paper towels. Hands should be re-washed, again thoroughly and vigorously on both sides, using a brush and air-dried in a place free from flies or other insects

9. Any spills must be wiped up immediately. Pools or splashes will spread bacteria to other items touched.

CHILLING

1. Before touching any food, hands must be washed in hot, soapy water and dried with a paper towel. The towel must be clippily disposed of.

2. Every cooking item must be kept clean. Both before and after cooking, work surfaces must be wiped down with a new disposable cleaning cloth and hot, soapy water. The board must be rinsed well and air-dried in a place free from flies or other insects.

3. Protective table coverings (such as those used in the primary classroom) must be wiped thoroughly before and after use. The protective table coverings must not be used for any other activities (such as art or science work).
Do not store raw foods such as meat or fish where their juices can drip on to ready-to-eat foods such as pies or trifles. Place raw fish in a deep tray or dish to prevent it from dripping on to other foods or the fridge surfaces. Cover all cooked foods securely with clingfilm.

Discard any eggs which are cracked and which could be contaminated with bacteria.

N.B.: Whilst eggs do not need to be stored in a refrigerator, it is important that they are consumed by the ‘best before’ date.
**GOOD PRACTICE**

- Always buy eggs from a reputable supplier, such as a supermarket, which has a quick turnover.
- Focus on Food recommends that you buy eggs from vaccinated Salmonella-free flocks. Look for 'Lion Brand' or 'Laid in Britain'.
- Only buy eggs which are date-stamped and always use them when they are at their freshest – never after the ‘best before’ date.
- Never use damaged (cracked) or dirty eggs.
- Take care not to splash raw egg on to other foods, surfaces or utensils.
- Always cook eggs, and foods containing eggs, thoroughly.
- Always wash and dry hands thoroughly after touching or working with eggs.
- Always clean the food area, dishes and utensils used for eggs with hot, soapy water.
- Never use raw egg in any dish which is to be eaten uncooked (such as chocolate mousse or ice cream) by children, pregnant women, the sick or the elderly. Do not allow children to taste raw egg or any mixture (such as cake mixture) containing raw egg.
- Always dispose immediately of eggshells. Do not leave them on work surfaces whilst cooking.
- Do not allow children to play with eggshells or to use them for art work or for such activities as growing cress.
- Commercial ready-made mayonnaise or cake icing are safe to use as they are nearly always made with pasteurized egg (pasteurization is a heating process used to make the egg safe to eat.)
- Never use damaged (cracked) or dirty eggs.
- Take care not to splash raw egg on to other foods, surfaces or utensils.
- Always cook eggs, and foods containing eggs, thoroughly.
- Always wash and dry hands thoroughly after touching or working with eggs.
- Always clean the food area, dishes and utensils used for eggs with hot, soapy water.
- Never use raw egg in any dish which is to be eaten uncooked (such as chocolate mousse or ice cream) by children, pregnant women, the sick or the elderly. Do not allow children to taste raw egg or any mixture (such as cake mixture) containing raw egg.
- Always dispose immediately of eggshells. Do not leave them on work surfaces whilst cooking.
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- Commercial ready-made mayonnaise or cake icing are safe to use as they are nearly always made with pasteurized egg (pasteurization is a heating process used to make the egg safe to eat.)

**USING EGGS**
A very small number of eggs may contain the Salmonella bacterium which can cause serious illness. If sensible precautions are taken, eggs can be safely used for cooking at school.

**WHAT ARE THE DANGERS?**
When using eggs, there are two main risks to avoid:

1. **Cross-contamination:** Bacteria spreading from eggs on to other foods, hands, work surfaces or utensils.
2. **Bacteria contained in eggs continuing to survive:** As a result of eggs being used raw in preparing mousses or some ice creams for example, or eggs not being properly cooked (as in runny-yolk boiled eggs).

**SAFETY REMINDERS**

- **Avoid Burns**
  - Always use oven gloves to lift tins or dishes from the oven, never teatowels or dish cloths.
  - Pupils should never be permitted to lift any hot trays or heavy dishes from the oven.

- **Avoid Scalds**
  - Always turn pan-handles inwards.
  - Loose clothing or long sleeves which may catch on pan-handles should never be worn for cooking activities.
  - Pupils should never be permitted to lift saucepans.

- **Avoid Contaminating Food**
  - Avoid touching the nose, mouth/lips or hair, and scrupulously avoid coughing or sneezing over food, during the cooking activities.
  - Aprons must always be removed before visiting the toilet.

- **Use Glass Bowls For Demonstrations Only**
  - Glass bowls should be used only for demonstrating mixing processes and showing children food ingredients.
  - Pupils should never be permitted to use glass bowls for food preparation, to carry them or to wash them up; they should use only plastic mixing bowls instead.

- **Use A Blender Safely**
  - Fill the blender goblet two-thirds full with the required food mixture or item(s) for blending. Ensure that the lid is fixed on correctly. Seat the blender goblet on the blender base. With dry hands, plug the blender in. Once the blender has completed its work, turn it off and remove the plug from the socket. (N.B.: Remember, pupils should never be permitted to operate or clean a blender.)

- **Show Cutting Skills**
  - Teach the ‘bridge’ and ‘claw’ cutting techniques of safe preparation of fruit and vegetables. Adults should always use knives with care.
  - Pupils should use only short-bladed sharp knives to cut fruit or vegetables or other ingredients.

- **Use Eggs Safely**
  - Do not allow children to taste raw egg either as it is or in mixtures.

- **Avoid a Blender Accident**
  - Fill a blender goblet only when it is removed from its position on the base and when the blender is not plugged in. Serious burns can result if the blender begins to operate without its lid firmly in place.
  - Operate the blender only with dry hands. (Pupils should never be permitted to operate or clean a blender.)

- **Avoid Contaminating Food**
  - Avoid touching the nose, mouth/lips or hair, and scrupulously avoid coughing or sneezing over food, during the cooking activities. Aprons must always be removed before visiting the toilet.
A. No. There is no need for anyone to wear disposable gloves when cooking but it is important to handle food with clean, well-washed hands and to make sure that any cuts or sores are properly covered. Sometimes cooks wear disposable gloves when cutting fresh chillis, for example, to prevent their hands from later irritating the skin or eyes. However, it is not usual for primary school pupils to prepare chillis in the cooking process.

Q. Our parent-helper teaches cooking and she’s great except for one or two things which really bother me. She always wears nail polish and lots of elaborate rings. On top of that, her hair is shoulder length and is never tied back! Should I tell her my concerns? After all, she makes the children conform - why shouldn’t she?

A. Yes, you must tell her (and anyone else who handles food). Not only can nail polish often conceal dirty nails, but it can easily flake off and fall into food. Ornate rings can harbour dangerous bacteria and must never be worn whilst preparing food. Hair also carries bacteria and must be tied well back from the face when working with food.

Q. Our Y6 children are very responsible and mature. Surely it would be okay for them to use the food processor and hand (stick) blenders which the PTA bought for the school?

A. No. KS 1-2 pupils must never operate electrical equipment, especially blenders and food processors with the added danger of their sharp blades. Accidents can easily happen even in well-supervised settings: burns can be caused by blending hot liquids; electric shocks may be caused by using equipment with wet hands. The risks are, quite simply, far too great. (Hand blenders are not recommended for use in primary schools.)

Q. Help! Two of my teacher colleagues are adamant that the children in our school must not be allowed to use sharp knives. Instead, they advocate the children using plastic knives or using table knives.

A. The children should not use plastic knives, not just because they do not cut well, but because they are liable to shatter dangerously and cause severe cuts. Table knives are unwieldy for small children to use when cutting and they are not sharp enough to cut anything but the softest items (for example, ripe melon).

Q. Should we or shouldn’t we?

A. Why not boost your colleagues’ confidence and make knife skills teaching the focus of a short in-school training session? Demonstrate the safe use of the ‘bridge’ and ‘claw’ cutting techniques. Show your colleagues the small, short-bladed knives which have sturdy handles and have been specially selected for small hands. You could also show them how the parisienne cutter is best used to core apples in place of a knife. Remember to stress the importance of always keeping the knives in their sheaths and out of the reach of the children.

Q. A parent came in to our school and told us that all the children should wear disposable gloves when cooking in class. Is that a recognized regulation? If so, I have never heard of it before.

A. The children should not use plastic gloves, not just because they do not cut well, but because they are liable to shatter dangerously and cause severe cuts. Table knives are unwieldy for small children to use when cutting and they are not sharp enough to cut anything but the softest items (for example, ripe melon).
A. Enlist the governor’s help to explain to children that picking up food with unwashed hands contaminates it; that eating already-portioned ingredients alters the recipe proportions and can spoil the pupils’ dishes; that sampling unportioned ingredients can mean that there may not be enough to go round. As for sampling children’s food, try to ensure as a rule that it is never on show unsupervised - and, in advance, set aside a special portion of the dish for this governor to sample - with the proviso that he eats nothing else!

Q. One of our governors really supports cooking in school but has an incredibly irritating habit: he frequently visits the cooking class and samples ingredients at will. He even eats some of the food the children have made without asking them. We have tried making a joke of it but it’s now gone past that. Our protests are falling on deaf ears!

Q. I have noticed that it is possible to buy thin plastic disposable aprons like those worn by nurses in hospitals. Are these better to use than the cloth aprons we already have?

A. No. Very thin disposable aprons melt on contact with heat and are so light that a draught can blow them upwards and catch them on equipment. Providing that your cloth aprons are hot-washed and dried thoroughly after each use, they are fine to use. Best of all, invest in some heavy-duty plastic, wipe-clean aprons, ensuring that they are wiped with hot, soapy water after each use. (Always check your Education Authority’s safety policy regarding aprons and the materials from which they are made.)

Q. I had food poisoning myself recently and I am worried about the likelihood of the children contracting it through unintended poor practice in class. Surely we are meant to have some kind of qualification certificate before we teach cooking?

A. Quality is key, not cost! The equipment in the COOKIT has been selected on the grounds of its durability and its safety, when used correctly. We advise that you purchase any extra single items from the supplier or, more economically overall, purchase an additional full COOKIT which contains all the items needed for cooking in groups of 6. Cheaper equipment is less likely to last, may not perform well and may even be - or become - dangerous.

Q. If we wanted to buy extra equipment for our COOKIT, surely it would be cheaper to get it from a local discount shop?

A. The teacher equipment is full-sized (for example, the grater is larger for ease of use by adult hands). Some of the equipment is intended to be used for processes that should not be carried out by pupils (for example, ladling hot liquids, cutting large vegetables or fruit, slicing bread, using saucepans, using a colander for straining hot vegetables, and taking items to and from the oven using oven gloves).

A. Food poisoning is a serious matter. If common sense rules are followed (the four Cs, for example), the likelihood of causing food poisoning is greatly reduced. Recognized courses in basic food safety and hygiene which culminate in certification are available (both in the evening and daytime) at most further education colleges. The courses usually last a few hours and there is a test to complete. It is recommended that the teacher in charge of food teaching (and others, if possible) should undertake this basic course.

Q. This may sound silly but we were wondering why there is a set of ‘teacher or adult only’ equipment in the COOKIT.

A. The teacher equipment is full-sized (for example, the grater is larger for ease of use by adult hands). Some of the equipment is intended to be used for processes that should not be carried out by pupils (for example, ladling hot liquids, cutting large vegetables or fruit, slicing bread, using saucepans, using a colander for straining hot vegetables, and taking items to and from the oven using oven gloves).

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