



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Environmental Health Guidance

For schools, settings and childminders

www.northumberland.gov.uk

How to use this document

This document provides a summary of the steps providers need to take to be compliant with Environmental Health requirements.

Environmental Health legislation is nationally agreed. The primary focus of this document is food safety, which underpins an Environmental Health inspection.

As an Early Years setting, school or childminder, you may be preparing food for children to consume. It is therefore important that managers, owners and headteachers understand what is required to protect children from food related illnesses.

Registration with Environmental Health

If you are preparing food on a regular basis for children to eat, you must register with Environmental Health. An inspection will then be carried out by an Environmental Health Inspector.

During the inspection providers will be given a 'risk rating' in the following areas:

- Structure – including the logistics and quality of the building, drainage, toilets and cleanliness
- Food – including fridge temperatures, storage of food and food hygiene practices
- Management – including processes followed to maintain good food hygiene and cleanliness and how this is documented

The risk rating is scored. This score will determine the frequency of routine inspections.

Key Requirements – Food Safety

There are a number of key requirements which are commonly identified within the inspection of an Early Years provision or school. These include:

- Storage of packed lunch boxes – Packed lunch boxes should be stored in a fridge. This should ideally be a separate fridge to the fridge where food, which will be prepared by the provision for consumption by other children, is being stored. If it is not possible to have a separate fridge, a shelf should be designated for the storage of packed lunch boxes. Some providers may be unable to store packed lunches in a fridge, e.g., schools where there are lots of children. In this case, parents should be informed that packed lunches are not refrigerated and should be encouraged to include an ice block in their child's lunch box.
- The Level 2 Food Safety qualification is recommended for all staff preparing food. Managers, or whoever oversees food safety within the setting, should hold a Level 3.

Receiving a Food Hygiene Rating

If your provision is run from a business address you will receive a food hygiene rating of between 0 and 5.

Childminders working from their home address will not receive a rating but should still be registered with Environmental Health if they are preparing food for children on a regular basis.

Within this document food preparation refers to the making of any meals, including sandwiches.



Key Requirements – Handwashing and Food Preparation

- In kitchens where food is being prepared there must be separate wash basins for handwashing, food preparation and washing dirty dishes. Provisions should therefore ideally have 3 sinks. However, 2 sinks or a sink and a half is sufficient as handwashing can be separated from food preparation and dish washing. If you are a childminder in your own home and only have 1 sink, you should ask the Environmental Health team for advice on how to manage this.
- Handwashing and food preparation sinks must be in the same room as the food preparation area. You should not need to go through a door or gate to get to the washing facilities.
- The handwashing requirements are for the person preparing any food. For children, they are fine to use handwashing facilities in the bathroom when washing their hands before eating.

Key Requirements – Toilets and Hygiene

- There must always be 2 doors between a toilet and a kitchen. If there is a toilet that opens directly into a kitchen, it must be locked off.
- Toilets without any windows must have an extractor fan.
- Hot and cold running water must be available for handwashing. If this is not available, for example if the boiler isn't working, the business should not open until this is fixed.
- Nappy changing facilities should ideally be located in a toilet area. If this is not possible, they can be based in another room as long as no food preparation is taking place in that room.
- There should be no doors or gates between the nappy changing area and the handwashing facilities.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)

- HACCP is really all about making sure that you know what the possible food hazards are in your business and taking the necessary steps to reduce them as far as practicable or preferably to eliminate them altogether.
- It involves looking at each step of food preparation from choosing suppliers to serving the food to the children in your care.
- Many of the controls will be simple common-sense practices.
- HACCP is a legal requirement based on five main principles.
- The aim is to think ahead about what possible problems could occur with the food you serve and prevent them happening in the first place. This approach will have obvious benefits to the running of your business.
- Further information around setting up and running a HACCP system can be found in the 'Safer Food, Better Business' document.

Supporting Documents

- Safer Food, Better Business – This should be considered by PVI settings and schools.
- Safer Food, Better Business for Childminders - This should be considered by childminders working on domestic premises.
- Food Standards Agency New Business Start Up Pack – This should be considered by any new providers and outlines the steps you need to take to prepare food onsite.
- Preventing and Controlling Infections – This should be considered by all providers to support effective infection control and hygiene methods.



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For further information and
guidance, please contact
your Early Years and Childcare
Performance Partner.

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