

THE MEETING PLACE (BOOKHAM)

Registered Company No. 7817471 and a Registered Charity No. 1192001



Food Safety Policy

Version No	Date	Details of changes included in update	Amendments by name and role
Original	February 2023	The Trustees of The Meeting Place (TMP) approved this Policy on 23.2.2023	n/a
Version1	February 2025	Minor wording changes	EW/A-ML - TMP Board

1.0 Policy Statement

This policy is to direct the safe operation of The Meeting Place's activities involving food handling, in particular the Community Fridge and Coffee Shop but this Policy would also apply to other TMP activities such as catering at a fund raiser or serving lunch at Anna Chaplaincy "Holiday at Home". It is important to understand the different types of food date labelling and advice on food packaging. Food may contain bacteria, and if stored for too long or at the wrong temperature can cause food poisoning.

2.0 Best Before and Use by Dates

Some foods deteriorate over time in a way that may present a food safety risk; for instance, some meat or dairy products. On most packaged food, depending on the product, you will see either:

- a use-by date - relating to food safety
- a best before date - relating to food quality

It is important to understand best before and use-by dates on food labels to keep food safe and to help reduce food waste.

2.1 Use-by dates are about safety

This is the most important date to remember. A use-by date on food is about safety. Never eat food after the use-by date, even if it looks and smells ok, as it could make you ill. You can cook and eat food until midnight on the use-by date but not after. You will see use-by dates on food that goes off quickly, such as meat products or ready-to-eat salads. For the use-by date to be a valid guide, storage instructions should be closely followed. For example, if the instructions on the packaging tell you to refrigerate, the food must be kept in a fridge at 5°C or below.

Food displayed in the Community Fridge must not be offered for human consumption when it is labelled as past its use by date. unless it has been frozen and relabelled prior to the date expiring¹

Giving out food after its use-by date puts people at risk and could lead to enforcement action being taken against the Food Bank/Community Fridge.

2.2 Best before dates are about quality

The best before date, sometimes shown as BBE (best before end), is about quality and not safety. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. Its flavour and texture might not be as good. Best before dates appear on a wide range of foods including:

- frozen foods (such as peas, chips and ice cream)
- dried foods (such as pasta and rice)
- tinned foods (such as baked beans and canned tomatoes)
- cheese

The best before date will only be accurate if the food is stored according to the instructions on the packaging.

2.3 The sniff test

For foods with a best before date (which concerns food quality), volunteers can use sensory clues to find out if the food is appropriate to eat. Volunteers could look for visible mould on bread, sniff/smell some dairy products with a best before date to see if they have soured. **Always check the date labels on food to see whether it has a use-by or best before being displayed.**²

Food that has been opened and put back in the fridge i.e. milk in the Coffee Shop must have a label stating when it was opened.

3.0 Food Allergies

Controlling the risks posed by allergens is a legal requirement under food safety and labelling laws. **Natasha's Law** which came into force in October 2021 requires any food that is pre-packed directly for sale and made on the premises has a label with a full list of ingredients, including any allergens in the food. For the Community Fridge receiving pre-packaged items, having food products labelled in such a way will enable better communication of ingredients and allergens with those receiving the food.

New allergen labelling legislation for pre-packed and non-pre-packed foods came into force on 13th December 2014. Food traders must be able to tell customers which of the 14 major allergens listed by the Food Standards Agency are in their food.

Volunteers should be aware of what an allergen is. People can be allergic to anything, however there are 14 named allergens that everyone who handles food should be aware of. These are:

- Celery and celeriac.
- Cereals containing gluten.

- Crustaceans.
- Eggs.
- Fish.
- Lupin.
- Molluscs.
- Milk.
- Mustard.
- Nuts.
- Peanuts.
- Sesame seeds.
- Soy.
- Sulphur dioxide and sulphites at levels above 10mg per kg or 10ml per litre.

The best way to avoid allergenic contamination is to keep any food items that contain any of these ingredients separate to other foods. All items containing the above allergens should be kept separate from the other food in the Community Fridge. They should be stored in separate storage areas. Taking steps to protect people from allergens and being transparent will allow people with food allergies to make safer choices.³

Cakes in the Coffee Shop will be clearly labelled with relevant allergens by the list of ingredients being displayed on the table next to the relevant cake for sale.

There must be a notice on the main entrance to the Community Fridge that states food allergens may be present in the food available at The Fridge and clients collect food at their own risk.

Loose bakery items must be clearly signed that they are not suitable for clients with allergies, as these are delivered to the fridge often mixed up, so cross contamination cannot be excluded. The Team Leader has a list of the contents of bakery items which should be made available to any client on request.

4.0 Responsibilities of The Meeting Place

- Overall responsibility for Food Hygiene belongs to TMP Board of Trustees
- Responsibility for managing this policy day to day is given to the Team Leader of each relevant activity (Community Fridge and Coffee Shop)

5.0 Volunteers' responsibilities

- Undertake Food Hygiene Training as per below.
- Co-operate with their Team Leader and those responsible for Food Hygiene where relevant •
Follow the requirements in the appendices when setting up the Community Fridge/Coffee Shop and storing food collected from supermarkets, The Grange or private individuals in line with this guidance.
- Report contraventions of the Food Hygiene Policy and Procedures promptly to their Team Leader to ensure food safety is of a high standard

6.0 Training

Food hygiene training will be offered to staff and volunteers according to the TMP activity they are involved with (e.g. Coffee Shop, Community Fridge). Subject to prior approval, any costs of training will be reimbursed. Recommended supplier <https://www.thesaferfoodgroup.com/food-hygienelevel-2-retail.php>

Coffee Shop and Community Fridge - **Leaders** to undertake food hygiene training level 2 (Retail)
Volunteers are encouraged to undertake food hygiene training level 2 (Retail)

7.0 Information

Appropriate information will be available in each relevant Meeting Place location:

- Food Safety Guidelines o Appendix 1 Receiving surplus food at the Community Fridge o Appendix 2 Coffee Shop o Appendix 3 Community Fridge
- The current employers' liability insurance certificate
- The Meeting Place Health and Safety Policy Statement

8.0 Resolving food hygiene problems

Any volunteer or member of staff with a food hygiene concern must first tell their Team Leader.

If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or the Team Leader decides that no action is required but the volunteer is not satisfied with this, the volunteer may then refer the matter to the TMP Board. This must be in writing.

9.0 Fridges and Freezers

9.1 Fridge and freezer reporting

At the start of each session in the Coffee Shop/Community Fridge record the date, your name and temperature of the fridge/freezer in: -

- Community Fridge - clear folder on shelf in lobby
- Coffee Shop - in diary

The coldest part of the fridge should be between 0 degrees Celsius and 5 degrees Celsius.

It is recommended that a 4-star freezer needs to operate at -18 degrees Celsius as a minimum. This will prevent bacteria from growing and will keep frozen food fresher for longer. Whilst it is recommended to keep the freezer below -18 degrees Celsius, it is important to not drop the temperature too low⁴.

9.2 Fridge cleaning (as needed) - (Community Fridge)

- Remove all food from fridge into clean boxes so shelves can be cleaned as required - ready to eat foods in one and salad, fruit and veg in the other - being aware that food out of the fridge should be out a shorter time as possible.
- Spray with food safe sanitiser and wipe away any visible dirt/ grease/ food bits.
- Then spray and wipe with the cleaning solution again, including the handle.
- Wipe dry with a paper towel.

Coffee Shop - responsibility for cleaning the fridge is held by Bookham Baptist Church.

9.3 Fridge contents monitoring -Before food is put back into the fridge after cleaning first check that all the food is suitable to be on the shelf. Anything that is not must go into the food waste caddy or compost.

- Throw out unlabelled items.
- Throw out bruised or damaged food items.
- Throw out food that appears or smells gone off or looks 'suspicious' for any other reason.
- Throw out food once past its use-by date.

10.0 References

1. WRAP. (2020). *Surplus food redistribution labelling guidance*. [Online]. WRAP. Last Updated: 21.4.2020. Available at: https://wrap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/WRAP-Surplus_food_redistribution_labelling_checklist [Accessed 28 December 2022].
2. Food Standards Agency. (2021). Best before and use-by dates. [Online]. Food Standards Agency. Last Updated: 19.03.2021. Available at <https://www.food.gov.uk/safetyhygiene/best-before-and-use-by-dates> [Accessed 15 November 2022].
3. Sarah Taylor. (2021). Food Safety for Food Banks: Rules & Regulations. [Online]. High Speed Training. Last Updated: 24.02.2021. Available at: <https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/food-banks-rules-regulations/> [Accessed 15 November 2022].
4. Food Standards Agency. (2020). Chilling. [Online]. Food Standards Agency. Last Updated: 24.12.2020. Available at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/chilling> [Accessed 30 December 2022].

Appendix 1

Receiving surplus food at the Community Fridge¹

CHECKLIST	
1	Check the date labels - It is illegal to supply food that is past its "Use By" date.
2	If the food is chilled, store at the correct temperature (between 2-5 degrees Celsius) at all times in the cool chain.
3	If receiving food that is near or beyond its "Best Before" date check all products are of sufficient quality and pack integrity is maintained and indicate how long each will be good to eat (see below ¹)

Pack type	Product	Extended life beyond 'Best Before'	Additional checks prior to redistribution*
Packed	Fresh produce Uncut/ Unprocessed	1- 14 days (dependent on produce type)	Visual check: confirm absence of moulds or rotting.
Packet	Bread and Bakery	1 week	Visual check: confirm absence of moulds or staleness.
Packet	Crisps	1 month	Visual check: confirm absence of staleness; confirm pack integrity maintained.
Packet	Cake	3 months	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Packet	Frozen food	3-6 months**	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Packet	Biscuits /Cereals	6 months	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Packet/ Bar	Confectionery	12 months	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Packet	Dried pasta and pulses	3 years	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Cans	Soup/ Beans/ Fish / Meat. etc	3 years	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained and cans are free from dents.
Foil Pack	Dry pasta/ Soup mix. etc.	3 years	Visual check: confirm pack integrity maintained.
Jars	Jams/ Condiments/ Sauces	3 years	Visual check: confirm integrity of seal and jars free from damage.
Non-permeable packs of soft drinks (e.g. glass, cans and pouches)	Ambient full-sugar drinks and water	3 months***	Visual check to confirm pack and seal integrity.
All other soft drinks pack types	Ambient soft drinks	1 month***	Visual check to confirm pack and seal integrity.

Eggs are marked with a best before date, which is fixed by law at no more than 28 days after the egg was laid. While it is ideal to eat eggs before this date has passed, they are often still be safe to eat for a short time after this date, provided they are cooked well.

NB: These are guidelines, and the table is not exhaustive.

* Sample packs may need to be opened to carry out a visual inspection (e.g. for mould).

** If items have been stored frozen at the Food Business Operator (FBO) in accordance with on-pack instructions, they will be safe to eat for months after the 'Best Before End' date. The star-rating storage life reflects the length of time the product is likely to remain in good condition. Eventually,

even well-frozen food will deteriorate and become unpalatable, whilst remaining safe to eat. Where frozen food is donated, The Meeting Place Community Fridge will ensure appropriate freezer capacity is available to ensure the food is retained at the correct temperature until it is defrosted for use.

Freezing – guidance for supplying and receiving surplus food

Freezing acts as a ‘pause button’ on the shelf life of food. So, if the food is suitable for freezing, it is a useful way to help more food get redistributed. It must be done safely and there are some specific labelling requirements. Ideally, the freezing process should commence early enough so that the food reaches at least -2°C at midnight of the day of the expiry of the ‘Use By’ date. While the food may not be fully frozen at midnight, there should be no risk to food safety if the freezing process is underway early enough before that time’, with the aim of freezing the food through to the core.

There will be shelves in the freezer clearly labelled and empty as available for deliveries to avoid mixing with existing stock.

The food must be relabelled as the nature of the food will have changed. The following steps should be followed.

1	Ensure the food is in an acceptable condition and suitable for freezing (e.g. as indicated by the manufacturer’s instructions)
2	Relabel the food clearly if not already labelled by the shop. Remove/cover the original “Use By” date if the product had one and apply a new “Best Before” date including date frozen. Ensure information is provided that the product should be thawed under refrigeration and used within 24 hours.
3	Ensure the food is frozen all the way through to the core.

Appendix 2

COFFEE SHOP FOOD HANDLING & HYGIENE GUIDANCE

STAFF inform Team leader of any illness/sickness/cough/cold etc.

Long hair should be tied back (not hanging loose).

WASH HANDS WITH SOAP AND WATER AND DRY ON PAPER TOWELS/OR USE GEL

BEFORE: touching food or using tongs/knives etc.

AFTER HANDLING:

- Money
- Rubbish
- Cleaning
- Going to bathroom
- Coughing/sneezing
- Washing up
- Playing with children

CLEANING - BEGINNING AND END OF EACH SESSION

- + Clean trolleys, and hatch/work surfaces before and end of each session with anti-bacterial spray and dry with paper towel
- + Clean tables
- + Clean coffee machine after each session (instructions are in plastic boxes)
- + Tongs/slicers and knives must be washed before and at the end of each session.
- + Clean fridge handles
- + Clean taps in wash hand basin in kitchen
- + Wash trays/plates before each use
- + Wash milk flasks at the beginning and end of each session. +

On Saturday when using small milk jugs WASH them before filling

- + Wash biscuit/cake containers when empty.
- + If necessary clean kitchen floor at end of each session using clean water, floor cleaner and mop then put Warning Sign down.

+ Wash dirty aprons/tablecloths – *Team Leader*

MILK

Saturday – keep in fridge all morning. Tiny jugs only out on tables for 30 mins. All excess milk will be discarded at the end of the session.

On Saturday when using small milk jugs WASH them before filling

CAKES

Stored with date on container.

Freeze straight after session ends in Bookham Baptist Church (BBC) freezer. Wrap initially in greaseproof paper then aluminium foil and use masking tape as label – TMP TYPE OF CAKE, DATE FROZEN AND BEST BEFORE DATE.

Allergies – Ingredients for cakes/biscuits from The Grange are kept in the folder which is kept in the Meeting Place cupboard. During the session the list is to be on the table alongside cakes.

Chemicals MUST BE STORED SEPARATELY IN OWN CONTAINER in the Meeting Place cupboard clearly labelled.

FRIDGE & FREEZER

As we are storing MILK in the fridge and cakes/ice cream *in the freezer* we need to record fridge and freezer temperatures – so keep a note of *THEM EVERY SESSION* and note it in the diary.

As it is BBC's fridge and freezer, they are responsible for cleaning it and clearing it out. However, if the fridge is a mess, then clean a shelf and only use that shelf for our products and clearly mark it

ICE CREAM: To be stored in freezer, labelled TMP. Shelf life unopened is 2-3 months.

When opening a new carton/box of ice cream please label it with date of opening and "use by" as only to be used up to 6 weeks after opening.

RECORD KEEPING

The Team Leader should ensure that the Diary is used at each session to record attendance numbers (KPIs) and fridge and freezer temperatures, as well as adding any comments/queries or messages for the next sessions team.

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR THE COMMUNITY FRIDGE

At the commencement of each session check temperature of fridge and freezers and record on the log sheet kept next to the calendar. (The fridge thermometer hangs from the top shelf) The Fridge temperature should be no more than 5⁰ C. Freezers should be between -18⁰ C and -25⁰ C, if any of the machines are out of this range please report to a leader.

The key for the double wooden doors into the sanctuary is kept in the labelled yellow lidded box on the shelf near to the doors.

Tables to be set up in sanctuary and cleaned with Milton solution –cleaning materials are kept in lidded plastic box in top section above the lockable cupboard. Milton solution is in a labelled spray bottle.

Ensure hands are clean before handling food playing with children and stroking animals. Gloves and hand gel are available on our shelf. All food not required to be refrigerated to be sorted and displayed; any food that is not suitable for distribution to be put in blue compost bin or box marked for animals. Loose bakery items to be in separate area to other bakery items and allergen info/disclaimer notice to be placed nearby. The fridge should be emptied no sooner than 30 minutes before opening time. When fridge is empty, wipe all shelves and door handle with Milton cleaning solution.

All recently collected frozen food will be on the top two shelves of the left-hand freezer. Check all frozen food on these shelves are labelled, label those that are not and place on appropriate shelf in the rotation system. Frozen food to be taken from the oldest date section of the freezers five minutes before opening time and placed on tiered trolley.

At the end of the session, return any food that will be suitable for our next session to the fridge or if non fridge food, potatoes etc. put in crates and place on trolley, cover with a folded crate. Tables should be returned to cupboard. When we are able to leave the tables out, potatoes and non-fridge food can

stay on them but must be covered. All tables and trolley to be cleaned using Milton solution. Floor area checked for debris and cleaned as appropriate. Number of visitors to be recorded in the diary.