**Policy for the Management of Health Concerns in Food Handlers**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Oxford Brookes University is committed to promoting the health, safety and welfare of its staff. This includes the management of food hygiene and the management of health concerns as they relate to food handlers.

1.2 University management exercise a general responsibility for health and safety, and employees have a reciprocal responsibility to themselves and others under the legislation.

1. **STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

2.1 The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 1999, place an obligation on the University to make assessments of the risks to staff of work-related ill-health in relation to any work activities, and to take measures to control the risk identified.

2.2 The Food Safety Act 1990, which provides the framework for food legislation in Great Britain and creates offences in relation to safety, quality and labelling. The Food Hygiene Regulations 2006, which provide for the enforcement, including penalties of certain provisions of Regulation (European Community) No 178/2002 and amended the Food Safety Act 1990 to bring it in line with this regulation.

1. **FOOD HYGIENE STANDARDS**

3.1 A high degree of personal hygiene is essential where open food is handled. People who work with open food while suffering from certain infections (mainly from bacteria and viruses) can contaminate the food or surfaces the food may come into contact with. This can spread infection to other people through the food.

3.2 In 2009 the Food Standards Agency published a revised version of its guide, Food Handlers: Fitness to Work. This guidance helps managers and staff to prevent the spread of infection by advising which illnesses and symptoms staff should report and what managers should do in response.

3.3 For the first time, the guidance applies to all UK food business operators except primary producers (e.g. farmers and growers). This guidance is intended to:

• Accompany legislation

• Describe best practice

3.4 Oxford Brookes University is committed to following best practice standards in relation to food hygiene. Tender specifications and contracts with external service providers will reflect this commitment in practice as set out in this policy document and legal framework.

3.5 Oxford Brookes University is committed to ensuring that catering on campus is delivered in a safe and professional manner, by reputable suppliers who are able to demonstrate best practice. Estates and Facilities Management, through Catering Services, is the Directorate responsible for Food Safety across the campus.

3.5.1 The external service provider has responsibility for all Health and Safety aspects of catering, this includes due diligence of the supply chain and all aspects of food safety on site. Best Practice Guidelines for Catering on Campus have been produced. All Catering requests should go through Catering Services which is in line with the current guidance.

1. **DEFINITION OF FOOD HANDLER**

4.1 A food handler is someone who is:

* Employed directly in the production or preparation of foodstuffs.
* Staff maintaining food handling equipment

4.2 Food handling involves all aspects and storing of food from receipt of raw materials to the delivery of the final product and service.

1. **REASON FOR ACTION**

5.1 Food-borne infections from infected food handlers result primarily in gastro-intestinal infections.

5.2 The law requires that anyone working with food that has an infection that can be passed on through food and where there is any likelihood of contamination of food directly or indirectly is excluded from work.

5.3 The law also requires that food handlers receive appropriate supervision, instruction and training in food hygiene in line with their work activity and should enable them to handle food safely.

1. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

6.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor is responsible to the Board of Governors for the management of health, safety and welfare across the University. Under the aegis of the Chair of Governors, the University Senior Management Team will ensure that there is an effective policy framework in place, together with a supporting strategy for implementation and guidelines for the management of health and safety.

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6.1.2 The University is responsible for ensuring that the food hygiene management systems and processes are audited and services are delivered in line with best practice as set out by the Food Standards Agency and the legal framework.

6.1.3 Where food services at the University are provided by third party contractors, they are responsible for ensuring that food hygiene managements systems meet the requirements of the Food Standard Agency and the legal framework.

* 1. **Line Manager’s Responsibilities**
     1. Ensure all relevant employees have been assessed by Occupational Health and confirmed as being suitable for working in an open food area and that the employee’s fitness to work with open food is determined before they start work in a food area. This includes agency staff.
     2. Ensure all food handlers have been suitably trained to work in a food area and are aware of the policies, procedures and standards they must adhere to.
     3. Ensure food handlers follow the standards and requirements set out in the University’s sickness policy and local arrangements applying to food handlers.
     4. Diarrhoea and/or vomiting are the main symptoms of illnesses that can be transmitted through food. Managers must ensure staff handling food or working in a food handling area must report these symptoms to management immediately.
     5. Exclude those who pose a risk to food safety. This includes:
* Common self-limiting episodes including Norovirus, where no measures other than temporary exclusion are required. Employees can return to work when they have been symptom free for 48 hours. Where bacterial infection is suspected, the employee should consult their General Practitioner. If bacterial infection is confirmed, the employee must be referred to Occupational Health.
* The Environmental Health Department may be contacted either following a visit to the GP or following an assessment by Occupational Health. Occupational Health, Catering and University managers will work together with the Environmental Health Department in the management of a food safety scare.
* Managers must exclude staff with these symptoms from working with or around open food, normally for 48 hours from when symptoms stop.
* Conditions that require investigation by the local health authorities. These are enteric fever which includes typhoid, paratyphoid fever, E.coli and hepatitis. It is likely the employee will be off work for some time. In cases of doubt the member of staff should be referred to the Occupational Health Department for advice.
  + 1. Ensure any employee who has scaling, weeping or discharging lesions on an exposed part of their skin (face, neck, hands, arms or scalp) which cannot be adequately covered, is excluded from open food handling. These lesions may contain food poisoning bacteria.
    2. If skin infection is suspected the employee should consult their GP for appropriate treatment and not return to food handling until fully recovered. Similarly, any staff experiencing weeping or pustular lesions of the ears, eyes, mouth or gums should not handle food until healed.
    3. Complete a return to work interview and assessment to exclude any potential risks before allowing an employee to return to food handling. The assessment must be documented.
    4. Ensure food handlers complete a Return from Foreign Travel Declaration Form when they return from an overseas trip.
  1. **Employee’s Responsibilities** 
     1. Employees have a duty for taking all reasonable steps to promote and protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of those who could be affected by their actions or behaviour.
     2. Employees handling food or working in a food handling area must report symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting to management immediately in line with local policy and practice.
     3. Employees who handle food and who work around open food must always wash and dry their hands before handling food, or surfaces likely to come into contact with food in line with good food hygiene practice.
     4. Cooperate with management in the investigation of breaches of food safety.

**6.4 Directorate of Human Resources Responsibilities**

* + 1. **HR Managers’ Responsibilities**

6.4.1.1 Give advice and guidance to line managers on the University Health and Safety Policy.

* + 1. **Occupational Health Department Responsibilities**
       1. The role of Occupational Health is to advise on compliance of the standards set out in this policy and their application at Oxford Brookes University.
       2. Assess a prospective employee’s suitability to work with open food **(Appendix 1.)**
       3. Liaise with the Environmental Health Department in the event of an investigation of alleged food poisoning.
       4. Give advice and guidance on:
* Diarrhoeal illness and return to work
* Skin conditions

**Date:** June 2016

**Date of next review:** June 2018

**Appendix 1**

**Confidential Pre-placement Occupational Health Assessment for Food Handlers**

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| **Surname:** | **First Names:** | |
| **Title:** | **Date of Birth:** | |
| ***NB****: If you answer YES to any of the following questions please give details overleaf, including diagnosis and any treatment* | | |
| Do you have any skin problems affecting your hands, arms, face or neck (for example, eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis etc.)? | | YES/NO |
| Do you now have, or have you had in the last twelve months, any skin infection (including boils or abscesses)? | | YES/NO |
| Do you have any skin allergies? | | YES/NO |
| Do you bite your nails? | | YES/NO |
| Do you now have, or have you had in the last twelve months, an eye or ear infection? | | YES/NO |
| Do you see your dentist regularly (at least annually)? | | YES/NO |
| Do you now have, or have you had in the last twelve months, any dental, gum or mouth infections? | | YES/NO |
| Do you suffer from hay fever or perennial rhinitis (all-year ‘hay fever’) | | YES/NO |
| Do you suffer from chronic or frequent sinusitis? | | YES/NO |
| Do you suffer from frequent colds, sore throats or other respiratory infections? | | YES/NO |
| Do you suffer from chronic or frequent cough? | | YES/NO |
| Do you suffer from chronic or frequent diarrhoea? | | YES/NO |
| Have you ever been told that you are a carrier of an infectious disease? | | YES/NO |
| Do you have any problem which affects your ability to stand, lift or carry normally? | | YES/NO |
| To the best of my knowledge my answers to all these questions are correct and I have not withheld any relevant information  **Signature:** | | **Date:** |