

SAFETY FIRST

Kitchen safety and hygiene
The risk assessment
The four Cs
Big fridge disaster or clean and safe?
Using eggs
Safety reminders
Should we or shouldn't we?



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

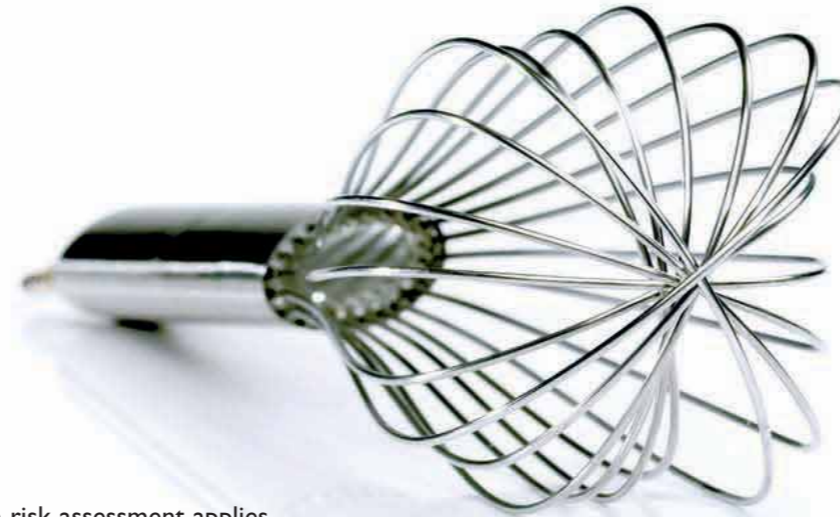
A risk assessment must be completed prior to every cooking session and vigilance must be maintained throughout the activity and the clearing-away procedures. The purpose of the risk assessment is to avoid, or certainly to minimize, the incidence of accident and injury. The potential hazards are categorized into low, medium and high risk. (Please note that low risk does not mean no risk.)

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

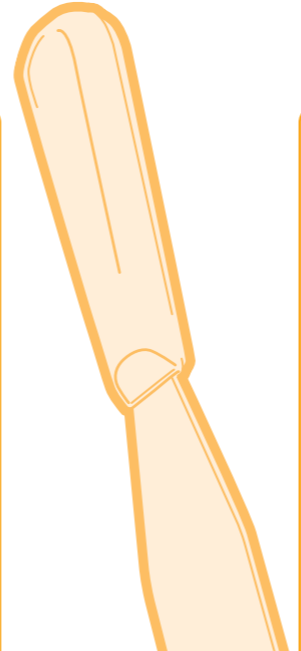
The following *Focus on Food* risk assessment pro forma is purely a sample. It draws attention to hazards commonly encountered within the primary classroom. Of course, cooking facilities, their location, set-up and use will vary from school to school.

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.

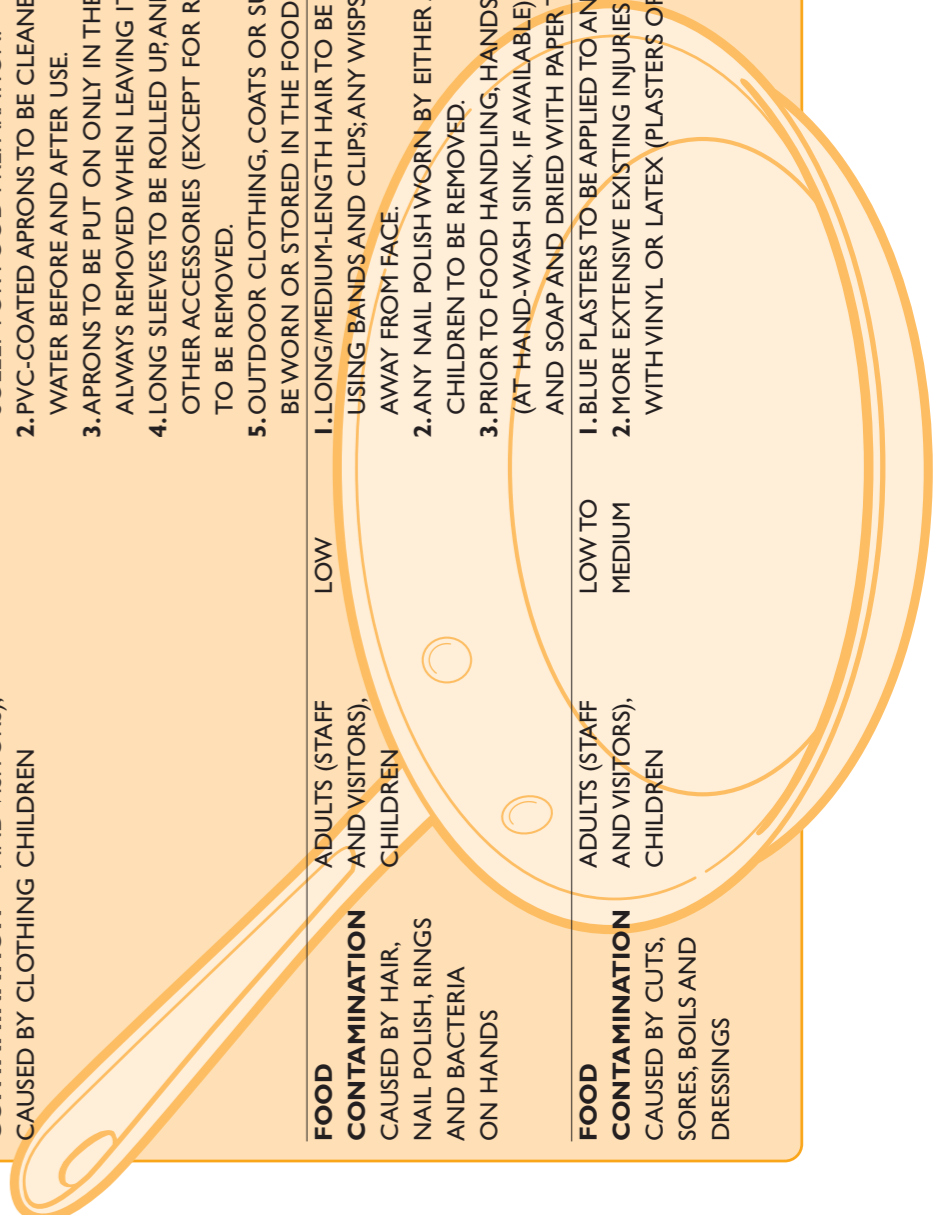
Some Education Authorities have their own food safety rules and guidelines. It is wise to cross-check with your own Authority's risk assessments before implementing the *Focus on Food* sample risk assessment.



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
CUTS FROM KNIVES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING GRATERS	ADULTS (STAFF)	MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> KNIVES TO BE STORED SEPARATELY FROM OTHER COOKING EQUIPMENT. KNIVES ALWAYS TO BE STORED IN THE SHEATHS PROVIDED. ENSURE KNIVES ARE STORED WHERE THEY CAN BE EASILY SEEN WHEN BEING REMOVED FROM DRAW OR CUPBOARD. REMOVE SHARP KNIVES FROM STORAGE AND SET ASIDE BEFORE TRYING TO REACH FOR OTHER ITEMS. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY BACTERIA FROM EQUIPMENT AND/OR SURFACES	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS)	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> EQUIPMENT TO BE HOT-WASHED TO REMOVE ALL FOOD PARTICLES AND THOROUGHLY DRIED BEFORE STORAGE. CHOPPING BOARDS AND ESPECIALLY PLASTIC BOWLS TO BE SCRUBBED WITH HOT WATER, DETERGENT, AND AIR-DRIED. EQUIPMENT TO BE INSPECTED REGULARLY FOR FOOD PARTICLES OR MOULD GROWTH (THE LATTER POSSIBLY DEVELOPING IF EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN PUT AWAY WET OR DIRTY). STORAGE AREAS TO BE WIPED WITH A CLEAN CLOTH AND HOT, SOAPY WATER AFTER EACH USE (ALLOW TO DRY THOROUGHLY BEFORE REPLACING CLEAN EQUIPMENT). FOOD, CLEANING AGENTS AND CLOTHS, INCLUDING TEATOWELS NEVER TO BE STORED WITH THE COOKING EQUIPMENT. 		

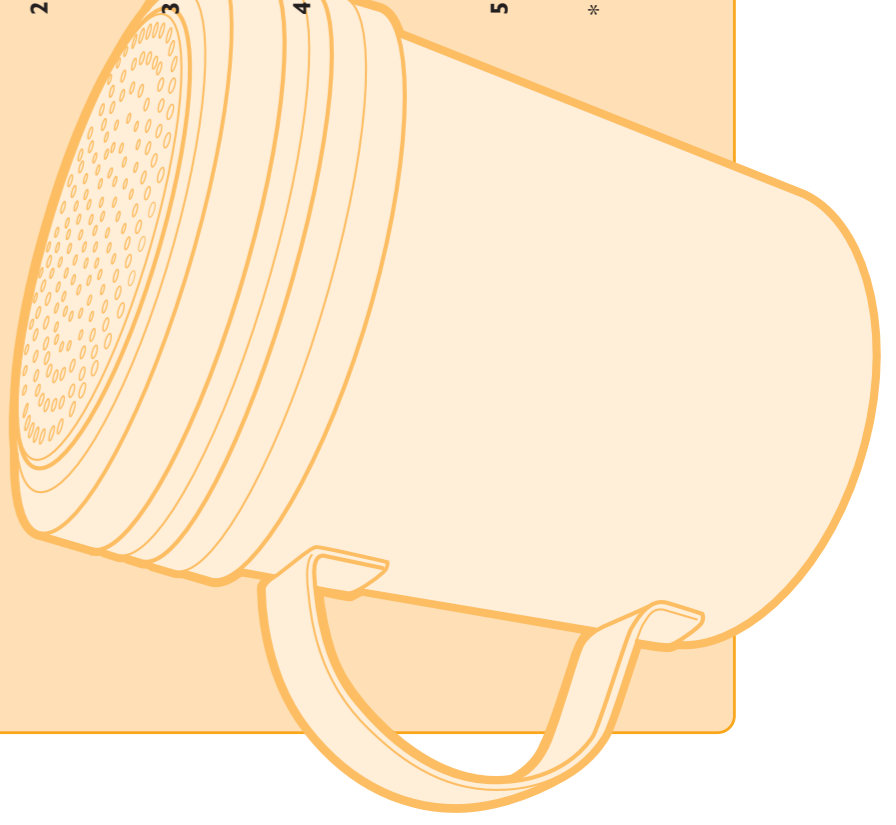


HAZARD	WHO COULD BE HARMED	RISK LEVEL	PRECAUTIONS AND CONTROL MEASURES IN THE COOKING AREA OR COOKIT STORAGE AREA	CHECK BY TICKING	NOTE HERE ANY FURTHER ACTION
TRIPPING, SLIPPING, FALLING	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> FLOOR AREA TO BE EVEN AND CLEAR OF EXTRANEIOUS FURNITURE, WIRES, BOXES OR OTHER ITEMS LIKELY TO CAUSE TRIPPING. FLOOR TO BE DRY AND CLEANED OF FOOD OR OTHER MATTER LIKELY TO CAUSE SLIPPING. COOKING AREA TO BE ACCESSIBLE ONLY TO CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE ACTIVITY AND WHO ARE UNDER STRICT SUPERVISION. RUNNING, JUMPING AND PUSHING TO BE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR TO BE WORN (LOW-HEELED, CLOSED-IN SHOES, LACES TIED). WHEELCHAIRS AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE RESTRICTED MOVEMENT TO BE CAREFULLY POSITIONED. TABLE HEIGHT(S) TO BE APPROPRIATE TO PUPIL HEIGHT. PUPILS NEVER TO SIT, STAND OR KNEEL ON CHAIRS OR STOOLS. 		CONSIDER THE SAFE POSITIONING OF WHEELCHAIR USERS TO AVOID HAZARDS (E.G. HOT FOOD OR WATER) TO THEM AND TO THOSE THEY ARE WORKING WITH.
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY CLOTHING	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ALL PARTICIPANTS TO WEAR A CLEAN APRON RESERVED SOLELY FOR FOOD PREPARATION. PVC-COATED APRONS TO BE CLEANED WITH HOT, SOAPY WATER BEFORE AND AFTER USE. APRONS TO BE PUT ON ONLY IN THE COOKING AREA AND ALWAYS REMOVED WHEN LEAVING IT FOR ANY REASON. LONG SLEEVES TO BE ROLLED UP AND SCARVES AND OTHER ACCESSORIES (EXCEPT FOR RELIGIOUS HEAD WEAR) TO BE REMOVED. OUTDOOR CLOTHING, COATS OR SUIT JACKETS NEVER TO BE WORN OR STORED IN THE FOOD-PREPARATION AREA. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY HAIR, NAIL POLISH, RINGS AND BACTERIA ON HANDS	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> LONG/MEDIUM-LENGTH HAIR TO BE FASTENED BACK USING BANDS AND CLIPS; ANY WISPS TO BE SECURED AWAY FROM FACE. ANY NAIL POLISH WORN BY EITHER ADULTS OR CHILDREN TO BE REMOVED. PRIOR TO FOOD HANDLING, HANDS TO BE WASHED (AT HAND-WASH SINK, IF AVAILABLE), USING HOT WATER AND SOAP AND DRIED WITH PAPER TOWELS. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY CUTS, SORES, BOILS AND DRESSINGS	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> BLUE PLASTERS TO BE APPLIED TO ANY CUTS OR SORES. MORE EXTENSIVE EXISTING INJURIES TO BE COVERED WITH VINYL OR LATEX (PLASTERS OR GLOVES). 		



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
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY BACTERIA SPREAD BY ILLNESS	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> NO PARTICIPANT FEELING SICK OR UNWELL TO BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE COOKING AREA. NO PARTICIPANT SUFFERING OR RECENTLY RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS OR DIARRHOEA TO BE PERMITTED TO ENTER THE COOKING AREA. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY BACTERIA FROM EQUIPMENT AND/OR SURFACES	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> SURFACES TO BE WIPED WITH A DISPOSABLE CLOTH RETAINED SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE. SCHOOL TABLES/SURFACES TO BE COVERED WITH A CLEAN PLASTIC SHEET TO BE KEPT SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE. NO OUTDOOR/INDOOR CLOTHING, BAGS, BRIEF CASES, FILES, BOOKS OR BOXES TO BE PLACED ON THE COOKING SURFACE(S). ALL EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING CUTLERY TRAYS AND ALL LARGE AND SMALL ITEMS, TO BE CLEANED THOROUGHLY BEFORE AND AFTER THE COOKING ACTIVITY. CHOPPING BOARDS TO BE HOT-WASHED AND AIR-DRIED. COOKED AND RAW INGREDIENTS TO BE KEPT SEPARATED, BOTH IN STORAGE AND IN PREPARATION. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CAUSED BY BACTERIAL GROWTH RESULTING FROM INCORRECT STORAGE OF FOOD	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> REFRIGERATION TO BE AVAILABLE FOR STORING PERISHABLE FOODS AT THEIR CORRECT CONDITIONS (E.G. FROZEN: -18°C OR BELOW; REFRIGERATED: 0° - +5°C. ALL FOODS TO BE SECURELY COVERED TO PREVENT CROSS-CONTAMINATION. ALL FOODS NOT USED BY 'USE BY' DATE TO BE DISPOSED OF OR DESTROYED. DRY GOODS TO BE STORED IN SEALED CONTAINERS AND IN A CLEAN, DRY DESIGNATED AREA WELL AWAY FROM CLEANING AGENTS, PAINTS, STATIONERY AND OTHER POTENTIAL CONTAMINANTS. FOOD PREPARED IN CLASS TO BE STORED AT THE CORRECT TEMPERATURE UNTIL CONSUMED OR TAKEN HOME. FOOD IN TRANSIT TO BE PURCHASED FROM A SHOP WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE SCHOOL, STORED IN INSULATED BOXES OR BAGS AND THEN REFRIGERATED IMMEDIATELY. 		
FOOD CONTAMINATION CONTRACTED THROUGH SOIL OR OTHER GROWING MEDIUM	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> COOKING APRONS NEVER TO BE WORN WHEN PICKING OR HARVESTING PRODUCE. HANDS TO BE WASHED THOROUGHLY AFTER PICKING OR HARVESTING AND WASHING PRODUCE. SOIL AND OTHER GROWING MEDIA TO BE REMOVED BY WASHING PRIOR TO FOOD PREPARATION. OPEN WOUNDS TO BE COVERED BEFORE HANDLING SOIL-COVERED PRODUCE. 		

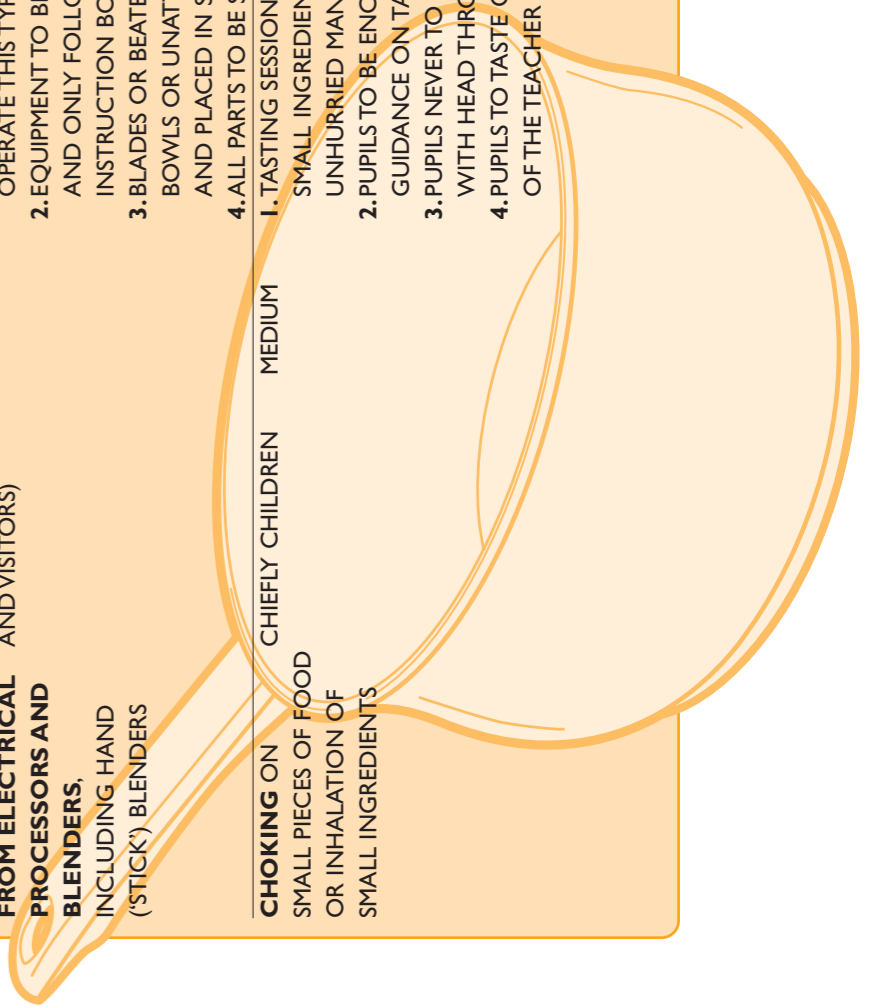
HAZARD	WHO COULD BE HARMED	RISK LEVEL	PRECAUTIONS AND CONTROL MEASURES IN THE COOKING AREA OR COOKIT STORAGE AREA	CHECK BY TICKING	NOTE HERE ANY FURTHER ACTION
FOOD CONTAMINATION CONTRACTED THROUGH WASTE ON TABLES, IN BINS OR ON THE FLOOR	ADULTS (STAFF, VISITORS AND JANITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> WASTE BOWLS USED ON FOOD PREPARATION TABLES TO BE EMPTIED PROMPTLY WHEN FULL. ANY SHARP-EDGED WASTE (OPEN TINS/CANS OR BROKEN/SHATTERED EQUIPMENT) TO BE WRAPPED, LABELLED AND PROMPTLY AND SAFELY DISPOSED OF. WASTE BINS TO BE LINED, FULL BAGS TO BE TIED AND SEALED AND PROMPTLY AND SAFELY DISPOSED OF. FOOD WASTE BINS TO BE WASHED AND DISINFECTED IMMEDIATELY AFTER EMPTYING. FOOD WASTE BINS TO BE RESERVED FOR FOOD ONLY AND NEVER TO BE USED FOR OTHER WASTE. ACCIDENTAL SPILLAGES OF FOOD (LIQUID OR SOLID) TO BE WIPED, SWEEPED OR VACUUMED, AND THE FLOOR WASHED BEFORE AND AFTER (NEVER DURING) COOKING ACTIVITIES. BAGS AND OUTDOOR CLOTHING NEVER TO BE PLACED ON WORK SURFACES. 		
REACTIONS TO FOOD – ALLERGIC OR INTOLERANCE	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	MEDIUM TO HIGH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> ALL ADULTS (STAFF AND ASSISTANT(S)), CHILDREN 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. PARENTAL CONSENT TO BE OBTAINED AND READILY AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION FOR EVERY PARTICIPATING CHILD TO HANDLE, TASTE AND CONSUME FOODSTUFFS AND TO USE COOKING EQUIPMENT. 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. ALTERNATIVE FOODSTUFFS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR ANY PUPILS WITH FOOD ALLERGIES OR INTOLERANCES. IN SOME CASES, IT MAY BE DEEMED NECESSARY TO EXCLUDE CERTAIN INGREDIENTS FROM THE RECIPES OR, IN EXTREME CASES, TO EXCLUDE THE PARTICIPANT FROM THE COOKING ACTIVITY*. DONATIONS OF FOOD FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES TO BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF THERE IS COMPLETE ASSURANCE THAT IT IS SAFE TO EAT. <p>* 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.</p>		INFORMATION PROVIDED FOR (NOTE NAME(S) OF PUPILS) CONFIRM THAT WRITTEN PERMISSION HAS BEEN OBTAINED FROM ALL PARENTS OF ALL PARTICIPATING CHILDREN. SIGNATURE PLEASE PRINT DATE DESIGNATION



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
DANGERS FROM HEAT, FIRE AND ELECTRICAL HAZARDS	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	LOW TO MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FLAMMABLE MATERIALS NOT TO BE STORED OR SITUATED CLOSE TO COOKERS. 2. COOKER/HOB AND OVEN TO BE OPERATED ONLY BY ADULT IN CHARGE. 3. MATCHES OR OTHER FIRE-LIGHTING MATERIALS NOT 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OVEN GLOVES TO BE USED TO CARRY HOT FOOD PANS/TINS. 2. OVEN SHELVES TO BE ADJUSTED BEFORE PUTTING ITEMS INSIDE THE OVEN. 3. PAN-HANDLES TO BE TURNED INWARDS BUT NOT OVER HOT HOBBS. 4. ADULTS 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. FRYING TO BE CARRIED OUT ONLY BY ADULTS AND WELL AWAY FROM CHILDREN. 8. CHILDREN TO BE KEPT WELL AWAY FROM COOKERS AND OVENS. 		



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
CUTS FROM KNIVES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING GRATERS	ADULTS (STAFF AND VISITORS), CHILDREN	MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 SET-UP 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (PUPILS NEVER TO BE PERMITTED TO HANDLE OR OPERATE THIS TYPE OF EQUIPMENT.) 2. EQUIPMENT TO BE USED ONLY BY COMPETENT ADULTS AND ONLY FOLLOWING PERUSAL OF APPLIANCE INSTRUCTION BOOK. 3. BLADES OR BEATERS NEVER TO BE LEFT IN WASHING-UP BOWLS OR UNATTENDED – TO BE WASHED UP IMMEDIATELY AND PLACED IN STORAGE BOX IN A SECURE PLACE. 4. ALL PARTS TO BE STORED IN A SAFE PLACE AFTER USE. 		
CHOKING ON SMALL PIECES OF FOOD OR INHALATION OF SMALL INGREDIENTS	CHIEFLY CHILDREN	MEDIUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 EAT FOODS FROM CUPPED HAND WITH HEAD THROWN BACK. 4. PUPILS TO TASTE OR EAT FOOD ONLY AT THE INVITATION OF THE TEACHER OR ADULT IN CHARGE. 		





THE FOUR CS CLEANING

Effective cleaning reduces bacteria on hands and on equipment and surfaces.

It is the responsibility of the adult in charge (teacher or assistant) to make sure that the work area is clean and properly prepared for cooking. Adults should set an example by following safe procedures and practices:

- a clean apron (used for cooking only) to be worn;
- long, loose hair to be tied back;
- no loose clothing or nail polish, or arm or finger jewellery, except a plain wedding band, to be worn;
- no open-toed sandals or mules to be worn;
- cuts, scratches, burns, sores or other wounds to be covered with waterproof dressings.

1. Before touching any food, hands must be washed in hot, soapy water and dried with a paper towel. The towel must be cleanly 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 cloth must be discarded after use, and never used for washing dishes.

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 dislodge 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. Teatowels 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 in the hand-wash sink, after visits to the toilet, after handling raw foods, after clearing rubbish and before starting a new task.

9. Any spills must be wiped up immediately. Pools or splashes can attract vermin and insects, and floor spillages can cause slips and falls.



COOKING

Thorough cooking kills harmful bacteria in food. Always observe the following safe cooking practices:

Never serve food – especially meats such as chicken - that is not cooked properly. (Chicken cooked to be eaten cold in a salad, for example, should first be cooked until it is piping hot inside, with no pinkness remaining, and any juices should run clear when the flesh is skewered. Cool the chicken rapidly and refrigerate it.)

Once food is cooked, either serve it immediately or keep it warm at 63°C or above until serving. Never re-heat or serve cooked food which has been left for some time in a warm room. (Harmful bacteria will have multiplied and may cause food poisoning.) Any perishable ingredients must be kept refrigerated until the cooking activity begins.

If preparing cooked foods in advance, always cool and then chill them quickly. Place cooled food in the refrigerator (see over).

CHILLING

Chilling food prevents bacteria from growing and multiplying. Some foods need to be kept chilled to keep them safe (such as fresh fish, foods featuring a 'use by' date, cooked food not served immediately or other ready-to-eat food such as prepared salads).

- Food that needs to be kept cold must be placed immediately in a clean refrigerator. The food should be stored at 5°C or below. Ensure that there is provision for storing ingredients brought into school and which require chilling. High-risk foods must not be left in warm classrooms. Ensure that the refrigerator is cleaned regularly.

- Cool cooked food as quickly as possible, ideally within 1 hour (spread cooked rice, for example, in a shallow tray, to facilitate fast cooling), then refrigerate for a maximum of 24 hours at 5°C (or below) in a clean container.

- Keep chilled foods out of the refrigerator for the shortest possible time during cooking preparation and lessons.

- Check the refrigerator temperature regularly and ensure that it does not exceed 5°C. (Purchase a fridge thermometer.)

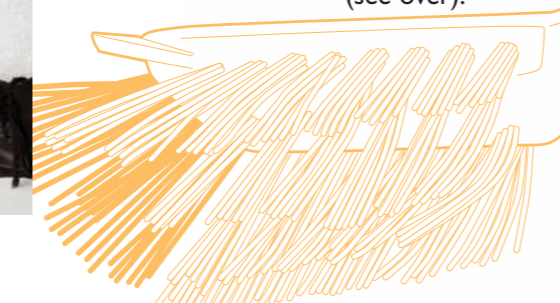
CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria is spread between food, surfaces and/or equipment. Always ensure that raw and cooked foods are kept apart.

Cross-contamination is most likely to happen if:

- raw food touches (or drips on to) other foods, equipment or surfaces. If raw meat, for example, drips on to a pudding, flan, salad or cooked meat in the fridge, bacteria will spread to these products and could cause illness;
- raw meat is cut on a chopping board. Bacteria can then spread from the meat to the board and the knife. If the board and knife remain unwashed and are then used, say, to slice tomato which is to be eaten raw, bacteria will be spread to the tomato;
- hands are not clean. Touching raw food and not washing hands thoroughly afterwards will spread bacteria to other food and food-preparation items touched.

Remember: Scrub chopping boards thoroughly and vigorously on both sides, using a brush and hot, soapy water. Always clean boards immediately after preparing raw meat or fish. Because cross-contamination can also transfer one food allergen from one food to another, very small amounts of an allergenic food can cause a severe reaction in some people. Therefore, care should be taken to store ingredients separately.





BIG FRIDGE DISASTER OR CLEAN AND SAFE?

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.

If storing pets' foods in the school refrigerator, store them well apart from foods for human consumption and always ensure that they are carefully covered.

Wipe the refrigerator out regularly using a clean cloth, a mild, scent-free detergent and hot water.

Buy a fridge thermometer and place it on the top shelf (the warmest area) of your fridge to check that the internal temperature remains at maximum 5°C.

DOES THIS HAPPEN IN YOUR SCHOOL?

- Teachers or helpers ignore basic hygiene rules: they wear nail polish, jewellery and open-toed shoes and have their hair loose.
- Food is bought in bulk, brought into the school and stored in boxes on the floor of the corridor; or in the staffroom, next to other supplies such as science materials or in the staffroom refrigerator which is full of teachers' snacks and packed lunches, with no one responsible for fridge management and cleaning.
- Purchased food is left overnight in teachers' or helpers' cars.
- High-risk foods (such as raw meat; see below) are either donated to the school or bought cheaply and in bulk from an unknown source – and are then used in school cooking activities.
- Pupils' food or packed lunches are not refrigerated on arrival at school.
- Bowls or storage containers are taken from the refrigerator to portion out during lessons and not returned quickly to the refrigerator.
- Food is left uncovered to cool and to the risks of contamination by humans, flies or other insects.
- Food-preparation surfaces are contaminated when the area is used for other activities such as art or science. School bags and piles of books are left on the work surfaces – or, worse, pupils are allowed to sit on them: all practices which introduce bacteria.
- Cooking aprons are not removed by participants when they visit the toilet or replaced when dirty.
- Pupils and adults do not exercise avoidance and/or courtesy when coughing or sneezing, and untied hair is allowed to trail into food ingredients or containers.
- Teachers or pupils who feel ill or who are suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea, heavy colds or coughs are not prevented from entering the food-preparation area, and are even allowed to handle food.
- Essential equipment or services are poorly maintained: for example, the refrigerator does not reach the required temperature or there is a lack of hot water.

HIGH-RISK FOODS

Because of their high risks of cross-contamination, the following foods must be treated and handled meticulously:

- meat and poultry; meat products including gravy and stock;
- soft-mould ripened cheeses and raw (i.e. unpasteurized) milk and cream;
- eggs – and products made from raw eggs – which are uncooked or only lightly cooked (such as mayonnaise and egg custard);
- shellfish and fish;
- cooked rice.





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:

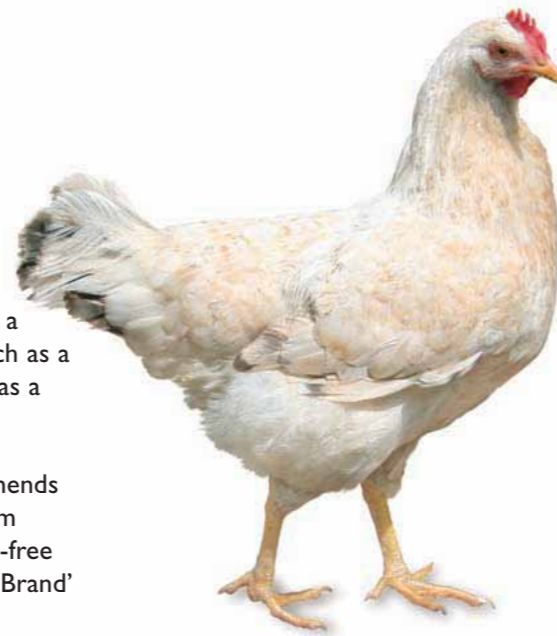
cross-contamination: bacteria spreading from eggs on to other foods, hands, work surfaces or utensils;

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).



GOOD PRACTICE

- Always buy eggs from a reputable supplier, such as a supermarket, which has a quick turn-over.
- *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 dishes whilst cooking.
- 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.

N.B.: Commercial ready-made mayonnaises 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.)

SAFETY REMINDERS



AVOID BURNS

Always use oven gloves to lift tins or dishes from the oven, never tea towels 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 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.)



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.

SHOULD WE OR SHOULDN'T WE?

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, it simply would not be okay. 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. 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. 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 schoolchildren 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.

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. 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. 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. 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. 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!

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. 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).

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. 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. 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. 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.