



# Healthy School Lunches Programme Operational Policy

## Supplier Performance Management

<b>Policy owner:</b>	Director of Strategic Programmes
<b>Policy is managed by:</b>	Principal Advisor, Special Projects
<b>Approval date:</b>	10 November 2025
<b>Next review:</b>	December 2026

### Purpose

---

1. This policy supports Ministry staff in working through Performance Issues with all lunch providers delivering meals to schools and kura. This includes external suppliers, iwi and hapū partners, schools and kura providing lunches directly (Internal model), including head schools providing lunches to other schools.
2. The purpose is to ensure a transparent, consistent, and mana-enhancing process that supports all ākonga to receive safe and nutritious lunches regardless of model and outlines steps for Ministry staff to follow to address emerging Performance Issues.

### Background

---

3. The Healthy School Lunches providers operate under different models:
  - **External suppliers** contracted by the Ministry to deliver lunches to one or more schools or kura;
  - **Iwi and hapū partners** who deliver lunches through community-based arrangements;
  - **Internal model** Schools and kura that prepare lunches for ākonga internally; and
  - **Head schools** that provide lunches to other schools under partnership arrangements.
4. All providers enter into an Agreement with the Ministry when engaged to provide lunches to specified schools or kura. This agreement outlines the standards and expectations for lunch delivery.
5. All providers, regardless of delivery model or agreement type, **will meet the standards** set out by the Ministry, to ensure consistent, high-quality service for ākonga.
6. Where a supplier is not meeting the required standards and/or expectations, the Ministry will work with them and relevant parties (such as the school or kura) to identify and address any Performance Issues.
7. This policy outlines a consistent process for managing Performance Issues across all models. Where specific guidance is required for a particular model (e.g., iwi/hapū partners or head schools), the Ministry will refer to tailored operational policies that reflect the nature of those relationships.

## Scope

---

8. This policy applies to **all Healthy School lunch providers**, including external suppliers, iwi and hapū partners, schools and kura providing lunches directly, and head schools providing lunches to other schools.
9. The policy will be applied consistently and equitably, while recognising the unique context and relationship structures of each delivery model.

## Policy Statements

---

10. Services delivered must align with the relevant agreement or arrangement, including the **Deliverables and Service Levels** document, which outlines the required quality, quantity, food safety, and overall service delivery.
11. A Performance Issue is any concern, reasonably held, about the delivery of services—such as failure to meet key performance measures, including meal quality, quantity, food safety, and suitability.
12. Performance Issues may be identified by;
  - The Ministry, through complaints, incidents, or monitoring against key performance measures defined in the agreement service levels; and
  - Schools or kura, through operational feedback.
13. Schools and kura manage the day-to-day relationship with their lunch provider and are encouraged to work collaboratively to resolve any issues.
14. If a school or kura cannot resolve a Performance Issue directly, it should be escalated to the Ministry. Evidence of how the school or kura has tried to resolve the issue will be provided to the Ministry at the point of escalation.
15. The Ministry will work with all parties to identify the issue, its root cause, and develop a Performance Improvement Plan with agreed actions, timeframes, responsibilities and a record of regular meetings to record progress.
16. All Performance Issues should be managed in a way that is open, transparent, and fair. Communication should be timely and respectful, with clear expectations and consequences.
17. Actions and timeframes to resolve issues will be managed by the Ministry and aligned to the standards and expectations defined in the Agreement of Service Levels.

## Process

---

18. In the assessment of whether formal performance managements steps need to be taken the Senior Advisors are key to determining whether complaints and incidents constitute a performance issue.
19. The primary expectations is that **in most situations** the school/kura will be able to resolve issues informally with their provider, and this can include with Ministry support.
20. If the concerns are food safety or food suitability related the steps to take are outlined in the Ministry's *Responding to Food Safety and Suitability Incidents Operational Policy*. If

Are there concerns with provision?

Have they been discussed with the provider?

Do they need to be escalated?

these concerns are repeated or there are a significant number of incidents, this will be treated as a Performance Issue.

21. All documentation related to Performance Issues—including **Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs)**, actions, and meeting notes—must be recorded in Salesforce. ***If performance is to improve, actions must be documented, agreed, measurable & timebound.***
22. The Ministry expects schools and kura to resolve issues informally with their provider as a first resort, and this can include Ministry support as needed.
23. If resolution is not possible, the issue will be escalated to the Ministry.
24. When escalated, the Senior Advisor (SA) will raise with the Service Delivery Manager (SDM) who will add the concern to the Programme Issue Register and consider a formal PIP.
25. The SDM will consult with the Commercial Manager to determine next steps, including whether a PIP should be implemented and which schools or kura are affected.
26. A PIP will be specific to an individual School or kura where a Performance Issue(s) has been identified.
27. The SDM will review the issue and proposed actions. Final approval to begin the formal Performance Improvement process will be obtained from the Director Strategic Programmes.
28. If a PIP is implemented, it will include:
- success measures;
  - responsibilities;
  - data sharing; and
  - review dates.
29. The duration of the PIP will vary depending on the agreed actions and the level of confidence on the performance improvement being maintained.
30. The finalised PIP must be signed by the provider, school or kura (if relevant), and the Ministry, and uploaded to Salesforce.
31. Formal reviews will occur weekly, as a minimum, throughout the duration of the PIP. All relevant parties will attend, and progress, results of actions are to be recorded. All Parties are to receive copies of these minutes.
32. The final review will result in a **recommendation report** and next steps, which will include:
- ending the PIP with successful resolution;
  - ending the PIP with ongoing monitoring;
  - extending the PIP; and
  - terminating the provider’s contract or arrangement with the school or kura.

The SDM will record the concern

The SDM will discuss options with the Commercial Manger

If agreed, the SDM will develop a PIP

The SDM will seek approval for the PIP from the Director

The PIP will include measures, responsibilities, data sharing and review dates

The PIP will be signed by the provider, school/kura and Ministry

The PIP will be reviewed weekly

The recommendation report will record outcomes and next steps

End PIP

Extend PIP

End Provision

33. The Recommendation report will be endorsed by the Commercial Manager and approved by the Director, Strategic Programmes.
34. In the event of termination, the Ministry will follow the process outlined in the provider agreement, by providing formal written notice with the rationale for termination.
35. The Ministry will be responsible for ensuring the school or kura receive an alternative provider once the notice period has finished.

## Ownership and Responsibilities

36. The below table outlines the required actions and the responsibility of each role:

Responsible	Task/Action
Senior Advisors (SA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly review complaints and incidents to assess whether they constitute a Performance Issue;</li> <li>• Escalate concerns to the relevant Service Delivery Manager (SDM);</li> <li>• Liaise with the provider, school or kura, and other Ministry staff to work through the Performance Issue;</li> <li>• Support the development and implementation of Performance Improvement Plans (PIPs); and</li> <li>• Record all relevant information in Salesforce.</li> </ul>
Service Delivery Manager (SDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead regional management of Performance Issues across all provider models;</li> <li>• Add escalated issues to the Programme Risk Register and act as owner for the duration of the PIP;</li> <li>• Notify Commercial of any Performance Issues and advise on escalation level;</li> <li>• Work alongside the SA and Commercial to determine next steps and facilitate PIP development;</li> <li>• Review proposed actions and seek final approval from the Director, Strategic Programmes;</li> <li>• Attend all formal PIP reviews and ensure documentation is complete; and</li> <li>• Record all relevant information in Salesforce, including meeting minutes and decisions.</li> </ul>
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be involved in all Performance Issues related to external suppliers;</li> <li>• Participate in PIP development and review processes;</li> <li>• Endorse the final recommendation report for PIP outcomes; and</li> <li>• Issue formal written notice in the event of contract termination.</li> </ul>
Director Strategic Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the initiation of new PIPs and final outcomes;</li> <li>• Review and approve the recommendation report following the final PIP review; and</li> <li>• Authorise contract termination decisions in accordance with provider agreements.</li> </ul>