

# Food For Families. Thanks to you.





Food For Families is a great way to get together to make a tangible difference to the lives of individuals and families experiencing hardship throughout the year.

For more information about Food For Families or to learn more about how to donate non-perishable food and household essential items through collections please visit our website or contact our friendly team.

**T** 1800 668 426

**E** [foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au](mailto:foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au)

[foodforfamilies.org.au/schools/](http://foodforfamilies.org.au/schools/)



# How it works



## 1. Register

Sign up online or over the phone with the Food For Families team.

T 1800 668 426

[foodforfamilies.org.au/register/](https://foodforfamilies.org.au/register/)



## 2. Promote / Collect

Place collection boxes in a visible location, such as the school reception area, or place a box in each classroom. Tell everyone about your collection.



## 3. Donate

Schedule a pick-up with the Food For Families team or deliver items to a Uniting drop off point.



## 4. Make an impact

Donations directly support people who need it most.

# Helping those in need

Food For Families has been running for over 30 years.

Food For Families was started by the local Leader newspaper group in 1991 and ran only at Christmas. Wesley Mission Victoria then took the lead with the aim of generating more material aid to support increasing demand on services, but no increases in funding.

In 2017, Wesley Mission became part of Uniting Vic.Tas, and we've continued to run Food For Families under Uniting banner.

And it has gone from strength to strength.

To keep up with the growing need, we now collect all year round, not just at Christmas time.

The food, gifts and household essentials are distributed at our emergency relief, family services and outreach centres across Victoria and Tasmania. Families can select food from our food pantries when times get tough and bills stack up. We also provide food that's easy to prepare for people experiencing homelessness.

## Health and Safety Guidelines

### Packing boxes safely

- Distribute weight evenly in boxes to prevent them from becoming too heavy.
- Avoid overfilling boxes – ensure they can be properly closed and sealed.
- Label heavy boxes or redistribute items to make lifting easier.
- Properly secure boxes by folding the edges of each lid backward and inserting the tips into the provided slots.

### Safe lifting and handling

- Plan lifting before you start – clear loading zones of obstructions.
- Reduce carrying distances where possible and use trolleys for heavy loads.
- Lift safely: Keep your back straight, bend your knees slightly, grip the box firmly, and lift with your legs.
- Only lift what you can manage – ask for help if needed.

### Box collection and storage

- Store boxes at a designated collection point near the main entrance for easy access.
- Ensure there is clear space for vehicles to park safely for loading and unloading.
- Provide trolleys to assist volunteers and drivers with moving boxes efficiently.

### Housekeeping and organisation

- Maintain a clean, organised, and hazard-free collection site.
- Mark safe pathways and storage zones using tape or signage.
- Designate areas for drop off, sorting, and storage to keep operations smooth.
- If things get cluttered, take time to stop and reorganise before continuing.



# In the classroom

How Food For Families aligns with school values and curriculum.

## The Impact of food insecurity in the community

It's heartbreaking to think that many families in our community are struggling to put food on the table. The rising cost of living means that more families are facing tough choices, such as paying for rent or buying groceries.

Schools have a powerful role to play in helping students understand the impact of food insecurity. It's not just about hunger – it affects people's health, wellbeing, and sense of belonging.

Engaging with Food For Families provides students with a real-world opportunity to explore ethical dilemmas, consider their responsibilities to others, and develop a deeper understanding of fairness and social justice.

## Why student involvement matters

Participating in Food For Families allows students to apply ethical concepts in a meaningful way and it is a great way for students to see firsthand how small actions can make a big difference.

- **For older students:** It offers a hands-on way to examine social justice, moral responsibility, and ethical decision-making through community engagement and leadership opportunities.
- **For younger students:** It helps them develop empathy, kindness, and a sense of fairness by understanding the challenges others face.

When students take part in food collections or advocacy, they are practicing ethical reasoning – thinking about the impact of their actions and understanding how even small efforts contribute to positive change.

“A big part of this program focuses on educating the students about how many more people are seeking relief than they ever have before”

– Penliegh and Essendon  
Grammer Chaplain, Janet.

## Examples of how schools can integrate Food For Families into classroom discussions or community projects

- **Empathy and perspective-taking:** Use real stories to encourage students to consider the lived experiences of others.
- **Fairness and social justice:** Investigate the ethical implications of food waste vs. food insecurity.
- **Creative advocacy:** Have students create awareness campaigns, persuasive writing, or social media content about food justice.

## Interactive learning and engagement

- **Guest speakers and real stories:** Hear from Uniting's program coordinators to share insights on challenges in food relief.

Program coordinators who work directly with people doing it tough see firsthand the difference donations make. Schools can invite guest speakers from Uniting's emergency relief services to share real stories about how Food For Families helps families in need. Hearing these real-life experiences makes it clear just how much their contributions matter – both in the moment and in the long run.

**Digital resources:** Use provided videos, testimonials, and school resources to spark discussions.



Campaign video about the rising cost of living



School led video about the impact of Food For Families



School resources available on our school's webpage



School stories about Food For Families

# Frequently asked questions

## Where does the donated food go?

All food, gifts, and household essentials donated go directly to people in crisis who access our pantries at our Emergency Relief centres across Victoria and Tasmania. Families can select food from our food pantries when times get tough and bills stack up. We also provide easy-to-prepare food for people experiencing homelessness.

## What else does Uniting Vic.Tas do?

Providing material aid isn't all we offer, people and families can access a range of other supports such as financial counselling, no-interest loans, case management, housing support and family violence services.

## Any tips for creating a big collection?

- **Make it a friendly competition** – Challenge different year levels or classrooms to see who can collect the most donations.
- **Themed collection days** – Assign specific food categories for each day of the week (e.g., “Pasta Monday,” “Canned Goods Tuesday”).
- **Set a school-wide goal** – Track progress on a donation thermometer in a common area.
- **Engage student leadership** – Have student leaders promote the campaign through assemblies, posters, and school announcements.
- **Host a special event** – Tie the collection into a school event, such as a sports day, casual dress day, or assembly.
- **Encourage family involvement** – Ask parents and caregivers to support their child's participation.

## How do we donate the collected goods?

- **Organise a pick-up:** If you have a large donation, please contact us for assistance. Email: [foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au](mailto:foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au) Phone: **1800 668 426**
- **Find your nearest drop off point** and drop off your collection during open hours. Consider inviting a small group of student leaders to see firsthand how their donations are making a real difference.

## Can we donate money to people in need?

Yes! Donate to Food For Families by visiting [unitingvictas.org.au/donate-to-food-for-families](http://unitingvictas.org.au/donate-to-food-for-families).

## Can we raise money instead?

Absolutely! Host a concert, market day, or gold coin fundraiser. Your proceeds help us purchase most needed items for our emergency relief pantries.

Let us know your plans or ideas by calling **1800 668 426** or email [foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au](mailto:foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au).

## What if we run out of Food For Families stickers or boxes?

Call us on **1800 668 426** or email [foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au](mailto:foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au), and we can send you more. Alternatively, add your own label with your participant ID onto any boxes or bags you return.

## Can our school choose when to run the Food For Families campaign?

Yes! Schools can run their Food For Families collection at any time of the year. Some schools prefer to coordinate their efforts with specific events, such as back-to-school drives, end-of-term giving, or local community events.

## Do we need to register our school to participate?

Yes, registering your school helps us provide the right resources and support to make your collection as successful as possible. Registered schools receive access to promotional materials, collection tips, and coordination assistance if needed.

## How do we promote Food For Families in our school community?

We provide a range of promotional materials, including **posters, communications templates, and social media images**. You can also:

- Display posters on notice boards, in classrooms and other prominent locations. You can add your own message onto some of our designs.
- Include Food For Families in school newsletters and bulletins.
- Announce it during assemblies or staff meetings.
- Display collection boxes in high-traffic areas.
- Get student leaders or volunteers involved in spreading the word.

# Checklist

“I’ve learned that it actually does make a difference. You might think ‘oh it’s just one can,’ but for someone that one can actually means a lot.”

– Penliegh and Essendon  
Grammer Student, Olivia

## Are there any items we cannot donate?

Yes, for health and safety reasons, we cannot accept:

- Perishable items (e.g., fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy).
- Expired or opened products.
- Alcohol or energy drinks.
- Homemade meals.
- Damaged or unsealed packaging.

For a full list of accepted items, see our enclosed suggested shopping list.

## Can we partner with other schools or community groups?

Absolutely! Some schools collaborate with local businesses, churches, or community groups to increase their impact.

## What happens after we donate?

### Can we see the impact?

Yes! Once your donation is received, we provide an **impact update** to show how your school's contribution has helped families in need. You will also receive a **certificate of appreciation** or a thank you message to share with students and staff. Schools can also **invite guest speakers from Uniting's emergency relief services** to share real stories about how Food For Families helps families in need. Call us on **1800 668 426** or email **foodforfamilies@unitingvictas.org.au** to organise.

- ☐ Register your school at [foodforfamilies.org.au/register/](https://foodforfamilies.org.au/register/)
- ☐ Receive your Food For Families branded collection boxes.
- ☐ Promote the campaign using resources we've provided in this guide or online at [foodforfamilies.org.au/resources/](https://foodforfamilies.org.au/resources/)
- ☐ Choose a central collection point and make it visible with your Food For Families branded boxes and posters.
- ☐ Set a donation deadline and let students, families and caregivers know when it's approaching.
- ☐ Pack boxes so weight is evenly distributed and write your school's details on each box.
- ☐ Contact the Food For Families team to arrange a pick up, or take your boxes to a Uniting Emergency Relief drop off point. You can find your nearest drop off point on our website ([foodforfamilies.org.au/find-a-drop-off-centre/](https://foodforfamilies.org.au/find-a-drop-off-centre/))
- ☐ When items are picked up or a drop off has been arranged, complete the drop off form to let us know: [foodforfamilies.org.au/food-for-families-drop-off-form/](https://foodforfamilies.org.au/food-for-families-drop-off-form/)
- ☐ Thank students and families for their support and provide the Food For Families team with feedback, it's so valuable to our team!

“It’s wonderful to see the empathy and compassion shown by the children throughout the collection.”

– Mount View Primary School Teacher, Libby

# About Uniting

Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church, delivering services and programs across Victoria and Tasmania.

We work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as Australia's First Peoples and as the traditional owners and custodians of this land.

We celebrate diversity and value the lived experience of people of every faith, ethnicity, age, disability, neurodivergence, culture, language, gender identity, sex, and sexual orientation.

We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and non-binary, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQA+) people at our services. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

The work we do is all about giving people the support they need to live happy and meaningful lives. We are committed to being people-focused and rights-based.

Learn more  
[unitingvictas.org.au](https://unitingvictas.org.au)



**Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited**  
ABN 81 098 317 125



Uniting is the community services organisation  
of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

