

A close-up photograph of a glass filled with fresh orange juice. Several slices of orange are arranged around the glass, with one slice perched on the rim. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange color, creating a warm and healthy atmosphere.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens Guide

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Why have a healthy eating policy? | 4 |
| Creating a healthy eating policy..... | 4 |
| Beyond the canteen..... | 6 |
| Getting support or endorsement..... | 6 |
| Promoting the policy | 6 |
| References | 7 |
| Sample policies | 8 |
| Adapted from the Victorian Government’s Go for Your Life Healthy Canteen Kit..... | 8 |
| Adapted from the NSW School Canteen Association’s ‘Healthy Kids’ canteen policy | 9 |
| Adapted from the Victorian Little Athletics Healthy Food Choice Policy | 10 |

Why have a healthy eating policy?

Research indicates that change is more achievable and sustainable if it is backed up by policy. A recent pilot in commercially-run leisure centres demonstrated that the centres that had a policy (and promoted it) were much more successful in expanding the range of healthy food choices and getting customers to buy them.

This is because having a policy can help a club:

- communicate a consistent message about healthy eating to the members, supporters and visitors
- plan and agree on a direction for change
- support canteen staff as they make the change
- set goals for the canteen and its operations
- make sure that the changes are in line with the values and priorities of the club
- help deal with negative feedback.

Creating a healthy eating policy

Creating a healthy eating policy can be done by a group or a single person. However it is created, the final product must have the support (or at least the endorsement) of the club committee.

Start work on the policy by thinking about why it is being developed. Reasons might include:

- the club wants to play a role in supporting the health and wellbeing of its members, supporters and visitors
- the club believes that good food fuels great on-field performance
- one of the club goals is to be regarded as a healthy, active place to be
- any or all of the above.

Secondly, consider what a healthy eating policy might achieve. It could:

- expand the range of healthy food choices available at the club
- encourage members to make better food choices
- help junior members to adopt healthy eating habits for life
- support local producers and suppliers
- contribute to a win at next year's grand final
- any or all of the above.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Then, decide how the healthy eating policy will help achieve these goals. This section is a summary of the changes that will be made. It might include:

- setting targets for the proportions of **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** foods on the menu
- adopting healthier cooking techniques
- substituting healthy ingredients for less healthy options
- changing the pricing structure to make less healthy options more expensive and reducing the price of more healthy options
- altering the display area of the canteen to highlight and promote more healthy items
- moving to smaller serving sizes for food prepared in the canteen and packaged items
- adhering to the Australian Dietary Guidelines and recommended daily serves (see the Section 1: Healthy Eating)
- any or all of the above.

Given that this is the beginning of the process, ideas may well change with time – but it is still worth thinking about what might be done. One option is to issue the policy as a draft at first and then return to it after some changes are made to see if it was overly ambitious or whether it could even go further.

For a starting point, sample policies are included at the end of this section.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Beyond the canteen

When developing the healthy eating policy, consider how the club might apply it beyond the canteen. The policy is likely to have much more credibility if it applies right across all club operations, not just at the canteen window.

For example, a policy might include:

- a commitment to seeking out healthy catering for club functions
- a decision to stop accepting sponsorship from fast food chains or other suppliers associated with less healthy food options
- seeking sponsorships for the club from organisations promoting healthy lifestyles through physical activity or healthy food such as a local sports store or fruit market
- providing 'active' rewards such as sports equipment or vouchers for club presentation nights, as an alternative to fast food vouchers
- replacing **RED category** items in vending machines with **AMBER** or **GREEN** alternatives or smaller packet sizes or removing vending machines entirely.

Getting support or endorsement

Once the draft policy is created, it is necessary to get it supported or endorsed by the club's committee. This may meet with some resistance, but following are some tips for getting the committee's support.

- Spend some time ascertaining the committee's knowledge and interests relating to food and engage with them by providing more information about the importance of healthy eating and its impact on health and wellbeing – and sports performance.
- Make some links with other club policies – especially those that look at smoking, drinking alcohol and spectator behaviour.
- Be willing to listen and compromise. It is better to have a more flexible policy than no policy at all.

Promoting the policy

Once the policy is endorsed, reflect on this achievement. Next, start considering how to let the club's members, supporters and visitors know about the new policy.

Promoting the policy is important; because it will help the members understand why these changes in the canteen or other areas of the club are being made. When people understand why something is being undertaken, they are much more likely to accept it.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Some of the ways to promote the new policy could include:

- displaying it around the club
- handing it out with membership or enrolment forms at the start of the season
- putting it in the club handbook (if there is one)
- writing a short article about it in the club newsletter or on the club website
- handing it out at club functions or meetings
- sending a copy to every member, with a brief note explaining what it is and why it was created.

References

Information in this section was sourced from:

- Food for health – Dietary guidelines for Australians: A guide to healthy eating (Australian Government National Medical and Health Research Council)
 - www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/files/n31.pdf
- Fresh Tastes Tool Kit (NSW Department of Health)
 - www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2004/fresh_tastes.html
- Healthy Canteen Kit (Victorian Government)
 - www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/healthycanteen/default.htm
- Healthy Food Choice Policy (Victorian Little Athletics Association)
- Healthy Kids School Canteen Management (New South Wales School Canteen Associations)
 - healthy-kids.com.au/category/14/canteen-management
- How to implement healthy food choices at your leisure centre café (Prof. Boyd Swinburne and Erin Gleeson, unpublished)
- Recommended Daily Servings, Australian Department of Health and Ageing
 - www.healthactive.gov.au/internet/healthactive/publishing.nsf/Content/recommended-daily-servings
- Sample Healthier Catering Policy (Singapore Government)
 - www.hpb.gov.sg/hpb/default.asp?pg_id=3410
- The School Canteen Handbook (Tasmanian Department of Education)
 - www.discover.tased.edu.au/hpe/cmh/Default.htm
- Smart Choices – Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools (Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment)
 - education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/food-drink-strategy.html

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Sample policies

Adapted from the Victorian Government's Go for Your Life Healthy Canteen Kit

Rationale

The school's canteen reflects the value the school puts on healthy eating practices to students and the wider school community. In addition to providing nutritious foods, the canteen has an important health promoting, educational and sociocultural role within the school. For students that use the canteen regularly, the foods purchased there make a significant contribution to total food intake and nutrition. Nutrition is important to health throughout life and it is particularly significant at times of rapid growth and development, which include the school years.

Aims

- Provide an enjoyable, nutritious and attractively presented selection of food and drinks at reasonable prices.
- Promote and encourage healthy food choices.
- Function as an efficient business enterprise.
- Encourage courtesy and consideration among all personnel using canteen facilities.

Nutrition policy

- Provide food consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia and the Department of Education and Training's School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy.
- Link to classroom and other school activities to complement and reinforce healthy eating messages.

Pricing and income

- The average mark-up on healthy food items shall be X per cent.
- The average mark-up on less healthy food items shall be greater, at Y per cent.

Review

- The policy will be reviewed annually by the canteen committee and amendments forwarded to the committee at least one month prior to their annual general meeting.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Adapted from the NSW School Canteen Association's 'Healthy Kids' canteen policy

Rationale

Our school canteen:

- provides healthier food choices for students in the school canteen menu that reflect the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents
- supports the Fresh Tastes @ School NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy which was developed from the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Young People: Government Action Plan 2003–2007 and recognises that schools are an ideal setting to educate about healthy food choices and physical activity
- provides the means by which children and adolescents can put into practice the nutrition messages they are being taught in the classroom
- models healthier food choices that are tasty, interesting and affordable. This can influence food choices at school and in the wider community.

Aims

The school canteen will aim to:

- encourage the development of good eating habits consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents
- provide a variety of food and drinks consistent with the Fresh Tastes @ School NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy
- provide an enjoyable, nutritious and attractively presented selection of food and drink at reasonable prices
- develop an appreciation of the social, ethnic and cultural characteristics of foods, as well as the nutritional aspects
- provide students with practical learning experiences about making healthy food choices that reinforce classroom teaching on nutrition
- function as an efficient business enterprise
- demonstrate high standards of food safety and hygiene in relation to the preparation, storage and serving of food at the canteen consistent with the national Food Standards Code
- provide an opportunity for the school community to participate in decisions concerning the operation of the school canteen through the canteen committee
- encourage courtesy and consideration among all personnel using canteen facilities
- provide an opportunity for parent and community involvement in children's education environment
- provide a financial contribution towards resources for all students in the school.

Distribution of the policy document

A current copy of this policy and supporting documents will be on permanent display in the school canteen. A copy of the current canteen policy that is signed and dated will be given to all canteen committee members at the first canteen committee meeting following the parent body annual general meeting.

Developing a Healthy Eating Policy

Healthy Club Canteens

Adapted from the Victorian Little Athletics Healthy Food Choice Policy

This Centre is aware that healthy eating is a vital part of good health. We recognise that lifestyle diseases such as heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, non-insulin dependent diabetes and obesity are all associated with the food we eat.

We acknowledge that healthy eating can have an impact on the lives of our members and that the provision of healthy foods will contribute to better health for all. Enjoying a variety of foods from the different food groups is the key to healthy eating.

The Centre will ensure that a variety of healthy food choices are available for all Club activities. This applies to all meetings, competitions, functions and events and to all members, officials, players, volunteers, spectators, visitors and any others taking part in Club activities.

The following strategies were adopted to ensure that a variety of healthy food choices are available at all Centre activities:

- The Centre canteen (where applicable) will provide a variety a variety of healthy food choices.
- Healthy food choices will be available at all Centre events and functions.
- The enjoyment of healthy eating and the role of food in relation to health will be promoted at Centre activities and in Centre publications.
- Healthy food choices will be displayed more prominently than other foods.
- Healthy food choices will be priced competitively.
- The variety of confectionery, potato chips, soft drinks and ice creams will be limited.
- The Centre will attempt to introduce at least two new healthy food choices to the Centre, each season.