



NSW HEALTHY SCHOOL CANTEEN STRATEGY

Welcome to Issue 6 of the Fresh Tastes @ School Newsletter!

Promoting the GREEN drinks

No we don't literally mean drinks GREEN in colour-but those that fit in the GREEN segment of the *Canteen Menu Planning Guide!*

With the ban on the sale of sugar sweetened drinks from government school canteens and vending machines to begin in Term 1 2007, this is an ideal opportunity for all school canteens to evaluate the drinks they have available for sale.

Like any GREEN food items, GREEN drinks should "Fill the menu". GREEN drinks include water, reduced fat plain milk, reduced fat flavoured milk and small serves of 99% fruit juice. The following list gives some ideas to assess your current situation and promote GREEN drinks:



- Walk into the canteen area and assess what you see. Are GREEN drinks at the eye level of students?
- Check the signage on your drinks cabinet and assess what you see. Any drink cabinet signs should promote GREEN drinks only.
- Look at the drinks you currently have available. Are they GREEN or AMBER? If in doubt consult *the Canteen Menu Planning Guide* and the *Sugar Sweetened Drink Ban for NSW Schools* flyer.

Remember that from the beginning of 2007, all drinks categorised as RED, cannot be sold at any time from government school canteens or school vending machines. This ban is supported by the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools who will encourage it in their sectors.

- Ensure that there are plenty of GREEN drinks available for students to choose from. Possibly limit the selection of AMBER on offer.
- Water is a great GREEN drink that quenches the thirst, especially in the hotter summer months. Stock water in large serve sizes. Some school canteens even provide cold water for free and just charge for the cup!
- Are GREEN drinks displayed attractively in the cabinet? Is their price clearly shown? Beverage representatives might be able to provide you with 'point of display' promotional material that could grab the attention of potential customers!
- Evaluate the pricing mark up on GREEN drinks. Increase the appeal of GREEN drinks by making them cheaper than amber drinks.

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The NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy is a partnership between the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Department of Health, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools.



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- Principals
- Canteen managers & volunteers
- Students (SRC)
- Parent organisations
- Parents & carers
- Teachers
- Food manufacturers & distributors
- Lessees & catering companies

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Promoting the GREEN drinks

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Did you know that one can of soft drink contains as much as 10 cubes of sugar?

From Term 1 2007, our school canteen will no longer be selling highly sugar sweetened drinks such as soft drinks. As part of the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy, our canteen will be promoting a range of nutritious drinks such as water and milk for students to enjoy!

Do you have any suggestions for future editions of the Fresh Tastes @ School newsletter?

Would you like to nominate your canteen or school for its "fresh" approach to the Strategy?

Let the Fresh Tastes team know by sending an email to the Fresh Tastes @ School Project Coordinator
nicole.stacey@det.nsw.edu.au

- Actively promote GREEN drinks by including them in meal deals and weekly specials.
- Communicate the benefits of GREEN drinks to your school community by putting 'snippets' in the school newsletter. An example of a newsletter 'snippet' is shown at right. More newsletter snippets can be found at the Healthy Kids website: www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au



Meadowbank Public School case study

Meadowbank Public School is an exceptional example of a small school with a huge community spirit. With a population of 186 students, the school canteen operates under the guidance of two dedicated volunteer parents, Fiona Collins and Sarah Wijngaarden who manage to co-ordinate a successful volunteer run *Fresh Tastes* canteen. Operating 5 days a week at lunch times only, the canteen has no paid canteen manager and is totally staffed by volunteers!

So what are Meadowbank Public School's secrets to volunteer recruitment?

- Sarah develops the volunteer roster term by term which allows for the varying work schedules of parents. Some parents even provide their work schedules so Sarah can slot them in on some of their days off.
- A very flexible "open door" policy means members of the Meadowbank school community are always welcome to pop in and help out. At times, this has even included the school's principal!
- Acknowledging that many parents have busy family schedules that may interfere with their ability to volunteer, the canteen has "specialised" part-time volunteers who drop in, perform their particular task and then leave. For example, one parent arrives each morning just to prepare veggie sticks while another parent closes up in the afternoon.
- As well as leaflets in Kindy orientation packs and notices in the school newsletter with headlining grabs such as "*Volunteer and put a smile on your child's face*", school events, such as "Grandparents' Day" provide an opportunity for the community to learn and see the school's *Fresh Tastes* canteen in action.
- Wanting to reach all members of the school community, the canteen organised a multicultural lunch. Families were asked to donate international dishes which were then sold. As well as being a hugely successful fundraiser, the sharing of food brought together the diverse multicultural groups within the school, breaking down any perceived cultural or language barriers. The event highlighted the role of the canteen and led to an increased number of volunteers.



With the latest addition to the canteen being a vibrant and colourful new mural developed by students, teachers and parent volunteers, the canteen is clearly a source of pride for this school community. As the Principal, Barry Pecar, says: "*Although we are a small school, we have a very committed community who support the children and the school. Our canteen operates five days a week through the generosity of our volunteers who include parents, grandparents and their friends. The commitment of these people and our canteen coordinators ensures that our canteen is a focal point of the school and its activities*".

Need more volunteers?

Volunteers are a valuable resource to many school canteens. Volunteers can support schools to provide a nutritious and profitable food service. So what are the steps to attract volunteers?

STEP 1: PROMOTE YOUR CANTEEN!

Look for opportunities to “advertise” that you follow the Fresh Tastes @ School Strategy. This could include: putting regular snippets in the school newsletter, on parent notice boards, front office areas, and even the school’s website.

Also consider your canteen work environment. Individuals are more likely to volunteer if they perceive your canteen to be a well managed friendly environment.

STEP 2: GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL

What are the work patterns and family structures in your school that might impact on your ability to recruit. Do most parents work fulltime? Will childcare or transportation be an issue?

Identify meaningful work opportunities for volunteers

Create a diverse range of volunteer opportunities. For example, some people enjoy food preparation whereas others would prefer to stack shelves and collate orders.

Consider short term or episodic volunteers

Short term or episodic volunteers ‘drop in’ to help out and complement a core group of volunteers. This suits the ‘time poor’, as well as those who might be between jobs or even shift workers.



‘Virtual Volunteering’

Virtual volunteering allows people to help out from their own homes or work places, possibly using the computer or internet.

Some jobs that could be done by virtual volunteers include:

- writing or designing promotional material signage
- photographing food
- printing labels for freshly made items
- writing up canteen procedures e.g. “how to make....”
- writing canteen ‘snippets’ for the school newsletter



STEP 3: FOCUS ON WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

People volunteer in the school canteen for a variety of reasons. It may be they have children at the school, just want to help, develop social contact with other parents or get a better understanding of the operations of the school.

However, no matter the reasons, try to ensure that each volunteer has his or her motivations considered!

STEP 4: PREPARE A JOB DESCRIPTION

Potential volunteers like to know exactly what they are being asked to do and approximately how much of their time will be required before they sign up!

The most effective way to do this is with a written job description. It should include a job title, main responsibilities as well as any skills or experience that would be ideal. Include the benefits for volunteers as well as a contact name and number for any queries.

STEP 5: PLAN YOUR RECRUITMENT APPROACH

There are two methods of recruitment - targeted and broad based.

A **targeted** approach is focused on recruiting a specific individual or individuals with the skills, interests and abilities you require. For example, a parent with a keen interest in photography might be targeted to photograph food for the schools canteen website. Targeted people should be approached personally - in the playground, a phone call, or a personalised invitation.

A **broad based** approach is ideal for regular ‘canteen positions’ because they do not necessarily require specific skills.

How should I advertise?

A notice in the school newsletter is a common approach which generally only achieves moderate success. So what can you do?

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Need more volunteers?

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- Focus on the **benefits** of volunteering rather than the needs of your organisation.
- Use catchy headlines e.g. "Our healthy canteen sells brain food for children-Why not come and volunteer!"
- Ask your existing volunteers to spread the word about the benefits of volunteering.
- Advertising should aim to reach different groups within your school. This includes mums and dads, friends, extended family members as well as the different cultural groups within your school.
- Consider advertising in the community section of your local newspaper or at your local library notice board!



Frequently Asked Questions

I am really confused about the ban on sugar sweetened drinks. Does it include milk and juice?

The sugar sweetened drink ban applies to all sugar sweetened drinks with more than 300kJ per serve or more than 100mg sodium per serve. These drinks cannot be sold at any time, for any reason, from the school canteen. Plain and flavoured milks, soy drinks and 99% fruit juices are not assessed under the 'occasional' food criteria and are therefore not included in this ban as these drinks offer other nutritional benefits.

When does the ban begin and is it mandatory?

The ban begins Term 1, 2007. The ban is mandatory for all NSW government schools. It is supported by both the NSW Association of Independent Schools and NSW Catholic Education Commission who will encourage schools in their sectors to implement it.

Our canteen follows the Strategy but the school still allows fundraising with RED foods. What can we do?

Schools are encouraged to adopt a whole-of-school approach and use the aims of the Strategy to guide decisions regarding food-related activities outside the canteen such as fundraising. Some tips for healthy fundraising are:

1. Collect some alternative healthy fundraising ideas. Some great ideas can be found on the NSW School Canteen Association website: www.schoolcanteens.org.au
2. Organise to meet with the school executive or those responsible for planning school fundraising events such as the school's P&C
3. Communicate the need for students to have consistent healthy eating messages
4. Offer to assist in whole school fundraiser planning. Suggest that the Canteen Action Planner (found on the *Fresh Tastes Toolkit* CD) be used to help map out the designated days. It is important that representatives of the school community have an opportunity to be involved in any fundraising decision making. That way they will be more likely to follow the plan!

The Healthy Kids website is an exciting new joint project of NSW Department of Health, NSW Department of Education & Training, National Heart Foundation and NSW Department of Sport & Recreation.

The Healthy Kids website is a 'how to' site with shopping tips, portion size information and meal ideas and recipes for eating at, and away from home. There are some suggestions on how to get kids moving and quick and easy activity ideas for children and families.

It also includes pages of resources, ideas for teachers, school and community-based project case studies and links to numerous other helpful websites.

The site contains some great information that could be used to reinforce the message of healthy eating and physical activity amongst your school community - maybe even some 'snippets' for the school newsletter!

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

WEB LINKS

For more information about the Strategy or to obtain additional copies of this newsletter go to:

NSW Department of Health
www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity

NSW Department of Education & Training
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/index.php>

Catholic Education Commission
www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Association of Independent Schools
www.aisnsw.edu.au

For other helpful information visit:
The NSW P&C Federation
www.pandc.org.au

NSW School Canteen Association
www.schoolcanteens.org.au

CONTACT US

For more information contact:
Nicole Stacey
Project Coordinator
Fresh Tastes @ School
NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy
Email: nicole.stacey@det.nsw.edu.au