Section 2

Getting ready

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Before taking action it is important to have a clear understanding of what is required and communicate this to all key people. There are a number of steps a school can take to get ready to implement the Right Bite strategy.

They include:

- establish or consolidate a healthy eating (Right Bite) committee
- get informed
- communicate the Right Bite strategy to the whole school community.

Key elements of success

- A healthy eating committee, representative of the preschool or school community is active and ready to plan and manage change in the preschool or school, including the canteen.
- The healthy eating committee is well informed about the Right Bite strategy and has accessed all relevant resources.
- The committee regularly communicates information about the Right Bite strategy and the site’s plans for change to the preschool or school community.
- The school or preschool site has a comprehensive healthy eating policy, developed in consultation with the school or preschool community, that includes information on all areas related to the Right Bite strategy. For schools with a canteen or other food service, the healthy eating policy requires a specific section devoted to the canteen or food service which will include information on the foods supplied, canteen or food service operations and management.
Establish or consolidate a healthy eating (or Right Bite) committee

For many schools and preschools, moving to a healthy food environment will mean a number of changes to the foods and drinks supplied to students across the whole school or preschool site, and to the way the canteen or food service operates. This process is best planned and managed by a committee.

The committee structure should have representation from all sections of the preschool or school community. This allows the different views and ideas to be considered and the responsibility for various aspects of management to be shared.

The committee should include:
- the school principal/leader or preschool director
- the canteen or food service manager
- parent representative(s)
- Governing Council representative
- canteen/food service volunteers
- student representatives
- member of the school or preschool staff
- representative teacher(s)
- Out of School Hours Care representative (if relevant).

Many preschools and schools already have a committee that can manage the change process. This is often a sub-committee of the Governing Council.

Once a committee has been established, members can be elected to fill certain roles. These may vary according to the needs in the school or preschool. All committees require:
- a chairperson – responsible for running committee meetings
- a secretary – responsible for issuing meeting agendas, taking minutes of meetings, publishing the minutes according to agreed procedures.

Role of the healthy eating committee

The committee oversees the implementation of the Right Bite food and drink supply strategy across all school and preschool activities.

The committee may:
- develop a strategy for communicating Right Bite to the whole school and preschool community
- develop an action plan for the implementation of Right Bite strategy
- determine whether the school intends to supply food and drinks from the RED category to students on no more than two occasions a term, and which activities in the school or preschool this will involve
- discuss how the strategy applies to a range of current school activities such as the canteen, fundraising, camps, classroom activities and excursions
- encourage communication between different groups in the school and preschool regarding implementation of the Right Bite strategy.

Tip

Let the school or preschool community know about the healthy eating committee in the school or preschool newsletter. Call for new members and explain the advantages of committee membership.

Ask people with particular skills to help out.
Get informed

The healthy eating committee needs to develop a good understanding of the requirements of the Right Bite strategy and familiarise themselves about the available resources.

A CD-ROM is located in the back of this manual. It includes:

- a copy of this manual
- the ‘Occasionally’ (RED category) nutrient Criteria
- the Right Bite Food and Drink Spectrum
- the Right Bite Ready Reckoner (tables that provide a guide to commonly available foods and drinks and whether they are likely to be in the GREEN, AMBER or RED categories)
- sample healthy eating policies
- a Powerpoint presentation.

The Powerpoint presentation outlines why healthy eating canteens are important, the reasons behind the Strategy and requirements in relation to food and drinks that should be available in schools and preschools. This presentation should be viewed by the committee and shared with the wider school or preschool community to understand the Right Bite strategy. These resources can be downloaded from the Department of Education and Children’s Service (DECS) website at www.decs.sa.gov.au

Right Bite newsletters

Newsletters will be developed and distributed periodically by the Right Bite project team to provide up to date information about the strategy and ideas for implementation. Copies are to be accessed from the DECS website.

Parent organisations’ newsletters and websites

Relevant journal articles and manuals are provided by parent organisations. See Appendix 5- Resources for web addresses.

The student body

Such groups as the student representative council (SRC) and many children and students will have good ideas to support the Right Bite strategy.

DECS district contacts

The DECS Student Wellbeing coordinators are located in each of its districts. To find out who your Wellbeing coordinator is visit the DECS website at www.decs.sa.gov.au

Case study

School: Wirreanda High School

In changing over to a healthy canteen, Wirreanda High School considered the importance of linking canteen practices to whole school policy as part of the Health Promoting Schools model.

After surveying the students and school community about the need for positive change, a canteen advisory committee was established to guide the canteen towards successful practices.

Represented by the Canteen Manager, Governing Council, Parents, School Leadership, Teachers, Finance and Students (SRC), the canteen is a positive model for all aspects of food supply across the school including the provision of healthy lunches for school based sporting events and excursions.

Partnerships with local bakeries and food suppliers have also been established to support the healthy changes being made at Wirreanda High School.
Communicate with the whole school or preschool community

Look for opportunities to communicate with the wider school or preschool community once the healthy eating committee is familiar with the **Right Bite** strategy. The whole school or preschool should be kept informed and provided with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback along the way.

There are many opportunities to inform, discuss and answer questions about the strategy. For example:

- run an information evening for parents, carers and other interested school community members
- hold student run information sessions about the strategy
- conduct information sessions for canteen volunteers
- put snippets about the strategy and general nutrition information in school or preschool newsletters
- include information about the strategy and links to websites with more information on the school/preschool internet and intranet site
- list canteens as a standing item of business on the agenda of parent, staff and Governing Council meetings
- talk to the student committee, eg Student Representative Council about the changes
- keep everyone informed at school assemblies
- photocopy and laminate the Occasional Nutrient Criteria Table and the Food and Drink Spectrum and put these up in the canteen to remind everyone of the requirements of the strategy
- keep local suppliers and distributors informed about the strategy and the changes the school is making to the menu.

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**Case study**

**School: Pooraka Primary School**

In developing an effective canteen team, Pooraka Primary School promoted the notion of a healthier canteen and requested volunteer support through the school newsletter. With the support of the Governing Council a whole of school committee was developed to set about improving the canteen menu by joining a network with seven other sites that were embarking upon a similar journey.

The results have seen whole school support for the provision of healthy food options, improved confidence in preparing recommended foods, regular tasting opportunities for students and a truly integrated canteen. Healthy new menu items are promoted via special days, and older students are involved in promoting the canteen’s healthy changes, as well as working in the canteen.
The active role of students

Students want to be involved in a meaningful way in school decision-making. They are partners in the change process and should be on the healthy eating (or Right Bite) committee. There are many ways students can actively support and promote the strategy. Below are some ideas to involve the student body.

- Using the information in Part 1 of this manual, students review the food supplied in various situations including the canteen menu and develop ideas for alternate or additional food and drinks that could be supplied. These ideas could be presented and considered at a healthy eating committee meeting. See page 78 for the section ‘Assessing the canteen menu’.
- Run a competition among students to name a new food that is going to be introduced into the school canteen. The prize on offer for the most creative name could be one week’s free lunches.
- The student body could decide on four theme days to be held throughout the year. Ask the students to name the day and select foods and drinks to be sold using the information in Part 1 of the manual. They could also be responsible for advertising the day.
- Run a taste test each month or term to trial new products before they are introduced. Use a different year group each time and ask students for feedback on taste, suitability and suggested price.
- Promote new food choices or special days at school assemblies.
- During design and technology classes, students could develop and market foods that would be suitable for sale in the school canteen. These ideas could inform the choices the canteen makes.
- Design new boards to advertise specials or a colourful menu board to promote the new canteen menu.
- Develop answers to a set of frequently asked questions about the strategy. These could be displayed in the school canteen, added to a school intranet page or put into the school newsletter.

Tip

Use the Power Point presentation on the CD ROM as part of your information sessions.

The presentation can be shown in total or in sections, depending on the time available and the audience.

These sessions will stimulate discussion and provide ideas and suggestions that can be considered by the committee in the planning phase.
A whole of school or preschool healthy eating policy

A whole of school or preschool healthy eating policy enables your school or preschool to have a shared vision on all aspects related to healthy eating. The policy can:

- align school and preschool activities with state and national health policies and priorities
- frame a coordinated approach to healthy eating that links curriculum with all food activities on the site
- provide opportunities for children and students to develop knowledge and practical skills to enable them to make healthy food choices now and in the future
- convey clear and appropriate messages with an emphasis on healthy eating and its relation to health and environmental sustainability
- share healthy eating information with families and the wider school community
- build partnerships between education and health sectors for the common goal of children and students and community health and wellbeing
- make provision for education and food supply staff and volunteers to access training and resources
- connect healthy eating and physical activity to support children and students to grow and develop while maintaining a healthy weight
- assist in protecting children and students from nutrition-related disease
- monitor and evaluate food and nutrition information to ensure evidence supports decisions and improvements in practice.

A healthy eating policy also:

- shares the responsibility so that the food service/canteen manager is not solely responsible
- reflects the values and the practices of the school or preschool community
- clarifies what the school and preschool community expects in regard to food supply
• provides a mandate for the activities in a school or preschool site to improve the nutritional quality of the food supply and related issues
• communicates a consistent message to the whole school and preschool community about the food and drinks provided
• gives direction and support to the canteen staff (in schools)

... in relation to a school canteen:
• defines the role and activities of the school canteen
• assists in objectively dealing with negative feedback and non-compliance or dispute with a canteen, or other food provision across the school or preschool site.

Healthy changes made to the food and drinks supplied within a school or preschool site are more likely to be sustained when they are supported by a policy.

Scope of the healthy eating policy

A whole of school or preschool healthy eating policy should cover all aspects of the Right Bite strategy. For schools the policy may also include the operation and management of the school canteen. However it may be helpful to maintain the current canteen committee and policy specifically for the management of the canteen and determine a further Healthy Eating committee for implementation of the strategy across the whole school site. Each site will need to determine what works best for their situation.

Some schools and preschools will already have a whole of site healthy eating policy, while some schools may have a canteen policy. Existing policies should be reviewed and may need to be revised in light of the Right Bite strategy.

Schools and preschools developing their first policy may wish to commence by developing a policy covering all aspects of food supply as required by the Right Bite strategy. Where schools have a canteen, the healthy eating policy will reflect the type of canteen eg volunteer run, school managed with paid staff and volunteers, operated by the school council or under licence to a contractor.

The healthy eating policy is endorsed by the whole school or preschool community. It should be referred to when making decisions about the canteen and other food supply issues and reviewed regularly to ensure it remains up to date.
What should a policy supporting a healthy food supply contain?

A policy needs to be easily understood, concise and useful for the people working with it. It is suggested that the following issues are included or addressed in a healthy food supply policy:

- background statement and/or rationale
- aims
- reference to the scope of issues to be covered by the policy eg canteen, fundraising, events
- information about foods and drinks to be offered according to the *Right Bite* strategy
- strategies for promoting and marketing healthy choices
- roles and responsibilities of educators, staff and volunteers
- food safety and hygiene and occupational health and safety guidelines and procedures
- financial management of the food service
- training availability for staff and volunteers
- links to the school or preschool curriculum
- links to the school or preschool community
- evaluation, review and monitoring processes.

The CD-ROM in the back of this manual provides a sample school and preschool policy.

School canteens need to be viable and this viability can be evaluated using a number of measures. These may include student support, numbers of canteen workers and income.

Funds generated by school canteens are often a significant source of revenue for a school. However the primary role of a canteen is to provide a service to students. In order to balance these two concerns, it is important that nutritious food items are presented in an attractive manner at an affordable price to students and that the canteen is managed efficiently and effectively. There is often a misconception that healthier foods are more expensive. This does not always have to be the case. See section 5 ‘Getting on with the job’ for more information.

Students and their families need to be involved in the process of supporting schools and preschools to provide and promote healthy eating. Strategies to involve them include:

- using the SACSA Framework as a basis for curriculum planning and appropriate classroom activities to support changes to the food supply including the canteen
- educating and informing parents through articles in the school/preschool newsletter, announcements at school assemblies and community activities
- involving parents and students in decisions about menu items and healthy fundraising
- advertising canteen prices on notice boards and sending price lists home
- encouraging parents to volunteer their services for the school canteen.
Food safety

Refer to the DECS *eat well sa schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines* (numbers 4.1–4.2):

4.1 All worksites must comply with the food safety legislation required under the **Food Act 2001** and the Regulations under the Act.

4.2 All worksites should comply with public and environmental health authority food safety policies under this legislation. In particular, all members of school and preschool communities should use effective hand washing techniques in the context of food handling.

Current requirements specify that all registered food premises, including canteens, must demonstrate that the food prepared and served for sale, is safe to eat in accordance with the SA Food Act 2001. Under the Food Act, school food services must prepare a food safety program. (See the Food Act at [https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Food%20Act%202001.aspx](https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Food%20Act%202001.aspx))

The preparation of food by volunteers in their homes for sale at a fund raising event is not covered by food law, though volunteers may nonetheless find the food safety information within this manual useful.

Good food safety practices underpin the provision of healthy food and drinks across schools and preschools. Food safety and handling requirements cover personal hygiene and food preparation practices and food storage and cleaning procedures. This includes settings such as the canteen, and any other situation where food is being prepared, eaten or sold to be eaten.

Personal hygiene requirements for food handlers include:

- using a handkerchief or tissue when coughing or sneezing.

Food preparation requirements include ensuring that:

- if gloves are used when food is handled, they must be changed when torn, after handling raw foods or changing tasks. If gloves are not used ensure thorough and regular hand washing between all steps
- benches are clean
- there are suitable areas for food preparation (animals are forbidden in these areas)
- avoiding cross contamination of cooked and raw foods. Thoroughly wash hands or utensils that have been used to prepare raw foods before they are used to prepare ready to eat or cooked foods.

Children and students are regularly handling their own food and, at times, are involved in food preparation in the school or preschool environment. Effective hand-washing is the single most important and effective standard precaution for the control and prevention of transmission of infection in school and preschool settings.

Effective hand washing involves:

- using soap and running water, warm to hot is best
- washing hands well
- rinsing hands under running water
- drying hands with disposable paper towel or a clean towel.

Schools and preschools must provide adequate hand-washing facilities for children and students.

(Chck Section 5 of this manual ‘Getting on with the job’ for more detailed information.)