Part 2

Putting it into practice
Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools and Preschools
Overview

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In summary, what is a healthy school or preschool food supply?
The foods and drinks provided in schools and preschools are integral to the educational environment, should reflect educational goals, and support and complement children’s and students’ learning.

It is important that parents, staff and students work together to support a whole of school or preschool approach to building a culture in which children and students actively choose nutritious foods and drinks and a healthy lifestyle.

A committee can assume responsibility for the implementation of the Right Bite strategy within SA schools and preschools.

Governing Councils are encouraged to develop a policy for their food supply (canteen or outsourced service) which reflects the Right Bite food and drink supply strategy. Policy development should include a discussion about the purpose of the food supply within the school or preschool community.

The changes needed to the food and drinks provided in schools and preschools will vary from site to site depending on factors such as:

- the food and drinks currently provided
- (for schools) whether there is a canteen and how many days a week it opens
- the available food preparation and storage facilities
- the level of volunteer support.
Healthy food and drink choices in the school and preschool environment

The intent of the Right Bite food and drink supply strategy is to offer healthy food and drink choices to children and students in South Australian schools and preschools. The primary focus of the strategy is on the foods and drinks supplied by schools and preschools to their students. Supply includes all foods and drinks offered for sale to students or provided as part of an activity, event or occasion.

All school staff members are strongly encouraged to assist with implementation of the strategy by modelling healthy eating practices to students. The strategy does not apply to foods or drinks students or staff bring from home. However education programs within the school and preschool curriculum can provide opportunities to involve families who can learn about the healthy eating practices being promoted. This can encourage a consistent approach to healthy eating at home and at the school or preschool, including the food and drinks brought from home.

As discussed in Part 1, foods and drinks have been classified into three categories according to their nutritional value: GREEN, AMBER and RED.

- **GREEN** category foods and drinks should be encouraged and promoted.
- **AMBER** category foods and drinks should be selected carefully.
- **RED** category foods and drinks should be avoided in most situations, particularly the school canteen and vending machines from 2008. Some **RED** category foods may be supplied on a maximum of two occasions per term.

Outsourced food supply

Some schools may choose to outsource their canteen. Outsourced providers also need to comply with the guidelines for the Right Bite strategy.

Schools that have a specific arrangement with a retail shop or other food service for the provision of foods and drinks need to provide guidance to those providers so that they can meet the requirements of the Right Bite strategy.

Schools contemplating outsourcing their canteen or food service should contact the Procurement Unit within DECS for assistance. Information is available at www.decs.sa.gov.au or www.ssonet.central.sa.edu.au

Guiding principles

Schools or preschools should be guided by the following principles.

- Profit should not come before student health and wellbeing.
- Focus of the strategy is on foods and drinks supplied to children and students rather than the wider community.
- Schools and preschools will take all opportunities to promote **GREEN** category foods and drinks and eliminate the promotion and supply of **RED** category foods and drinks.
- Schools and preschools will take all opportunities to promote and model consistent messages about healthy eating practices.

In South Australia, from 2008, the following foods and drinks are banned from sale in school canteens and vending machines:

- all food and beverages except those specified in the **GREEN** and **AMBER** categories
- confectionery
- drinks containing guarana or caffeine.
Moving beyond the canteen to embrace healthy eating

Healthy eating practices should be actively supported across the whole school and preschool environment. Throughout this section reference is made to specific guidelines listed in the document *eat well sa school and preschools healthy eating guidelines* (available on the DECS website [www.decs.sa.gov.au/eatwellsa](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/eatwellsa)).

### Fundraising events

Fundraising events are a good opportunity to encourage promotion of healthy choices. Schools and preschools are encouraged to provide non food based fundraising activities or, if foods are supplied, choose those from the **GREEN** or **AMBER** category.

### Industry driven fundraising (ie drives)

If considering a fundraising drive, sites are encouraged to investigate options that promote health and wellbeing. These could include seasonal fruits such as peaches, freeze dried fruits, toothbrushes, healthy food cookbooks, sunscreen, and horticultural products. There are a number of resources that provide ideas for healthy fundraising (see the resource list in Appendix 6).

### Non-industry driven fundraising

There are many fundraising options that do not require industry involvement. Schools and preschools could organise health promoting activities such as dance-a-thons or walk-a-thons.

Some schools and preschools also coordinate fundraising activities that focus on the wider community, such as fetes or gala days. These days are a great opportunity for the school or preschool to model to the wider community its commitment to healthy eating.

### Vending machines

Vending machines on school or preschool sites must not stock foods or drinks from the **RED** category and advertise only foods or drinks from the **GREEN** or **AMBER** category.

### School and preschool excursions

Schools and preschools are encouraged to supply foods and drinks from the **GREEN** or **AMBER** category to students while they are on a school excursion. When supplying drinks, water and reduced fat milks are the best options. If students are to purchase their own foods and drinks while on an excursion, they should be encouraged to purchase from suppliers offering healthy options.

### School camps

To provide optimum nutrition to students while on camp, foods and drinks from **GREEN** or **AMBER** categories are encouraged. This is the responsibility of the camp organiser in conjunction with the caterer at the camp site.

When preparing camp menus, care should be taken to choose foods and recipes low in saturated fat, salt and added sugars. Water and reduced fat milks are the best drinks for students on camp.

Fruit juice is in the **AMBER** category and should be selected carefully on the menu eg only provided at breakfast.

To cater for the additional energy requirements that students may have while on camp, schools are encouraged to supply more serves of foods from the **GREEN** and **AMBER** categories.

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5 Some people use soy milk in place of cow’s milk. Where milk is referred to in this manual, this can be read to include calcium-enriched soy drinks.
Rewards for children and students

Refer to the DECS *eat well sa schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines*, number 2.5:

‘Food should not be used within behaviour management programs; for example, by being given as a reward for positive behaviour or withheld as a disciplinary measure. This does not preclude the use of food as part of activities celebrating individual or group achievement.’

Examples of non-food rewards can include stickers, certificates and recognition in school or preschool newsletters.

School and preschool events focused on children and students

The strategy also applies to events such as school or preschool discos, dances and class parties, as the main target group for the sale or provision of foods and drinks is children and students. In these situations, foods from the RED category should not be supplied unless it is considered to be one of the two occasions a term where this is allowed. This consideration needs to be determined through a whole-of-site management approach.

Parents or guardians providing foods or drinks for these types of events should be encouraged to supply items from the GREEN or AMBER categories.

Special occasions

While GREEN and AMBER category foods and drinks are encouraged, on selected special occasions RED category foods may also be provided to children and students. This would count as one of the two occasions a term.

Curriculum activities

Refer to the DECS *eat well sa healthy eating guidelines*, numbers 1.1–1.3:

1.1 ‘Schools and preschools are responsible for children’s and students’ learning regarding food and nutrition as part of the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability Framework.’

1.2 ‘Learning programs should provide opportunities for developing practical food skills related to growing, selection, storage, preparation, cooking and serving food.’

1.3 ‘Healthy eating learning programs should be inclusive of socio-economic, cultural and spiritual perspectives of their communities.’

There are many occasions when food and drink products are used in the preschool, primary and secondary curriculum. When applying the Right Bite strategy to the curriculum, schools and preschools should take every opportunity to promote healthy eating practices. Foods and drinks used in conjunction with the teaching of units of work should be from the GREEN or AMBER categories.

Developing links with a school or preschool garden is an excellent way for students to experience:

• cooking and serving of food
• selecting, preparing and cooking healthy foods
• growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious seasonal produce from school gardens
• learning about sustainability.
Where cultural activities involve the supply of food and drinks to students (eg Lunar New Year, German Oktoberfest, French Bastille Day) schools should ensure that the food and drink supplied fits the context of the cultural activity.

It is acknowledged that some foods and drinks used in curriculum experiences may come from the RED category. Wherever possible, teachers should promote and use foods and drinks based on the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. However, if RED category foods are used, it is recommended that their use be infrequent and in small quantities such as a ‘taste-test’ experience.

Food prepared by students, which is then supplied or sold to other students in the school, should be from the GREEN or AMBER category. If this food is from the RED category, then this should count as one of the two occasions a term when RED category foods may be supplied to students.

Home Economics and SACE teachers are in an ideal position to model healthy eating practices and demonstrate, in a variety of ways, the importance of a healthy lifestyle. When engaging students in food or drink related activities, teachers should promote the notion that food and drink for a range of situations can be nutritious, tasty and attractive.

When undertaking hospitality studies, students may be required to work with a wide range of food and drink products. Food and drink products used and techniques and practices taught should match the vocational competencies being studied and must meet industry standards. It is acknowledged that this may sometimes involve the use of RED category foods and drinks.

While the focus of the strategy is on the food and drink supplied to students, every opportunity should be taken by hospitality students to model healthy eating when supplying food and drink at any function.

**Sporting events and clubs**

In order to give consistent messages about the importance of combining physical activity with healthy eating, schools and preschools are encouraged to supply foods and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories at sporting events such as sports days. At district, regional, state and national school sporting events, every opportunity should be taken to encourage healthy choices.

Sporting clubs conducting regular events as part of school activities (eg school swimming club), are encouraged to supply foods and drinks from the GREEN or AMBER categories.

Where an outside club or organisation uses school facilities (eg hall/fields) to run competitions/events for the wider community, these organisations should be made aware of the strategy and be strongly encouraged to sell healthy food and drink options at their canteen.

**Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)**

OSHC programs should be consistent with the Right Bite strategy and provide foods and drinks mainly from the GREEN and AMBER categories.

**Breakfast clubs**

Refer to the DECS eat well sa schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines (number 2.6):

> ‘Schools and preschools should support community initiatives that assist groups who are at risk in relation to food and nutrition; for example, students who are frequently hungry and do not have access to adequate nutritious good, including breakfast.’
The learning environment

Students who do not have breakfast may experience difficulty with concentration and hence reduce their learning capacity.

Where a school or preschool has chosen to provide a breakfast program or sell food to students before school through the canteen, all foods and drinks supplied should be from the GREEN or AMBER categories. RED category foods are not to be provided. This includes outside organisations.

A word about sponsorship and advertising

Sponsorship involving food or drink products within schools or preschools needs to be carefully considered. It should only be accepted when the product and/or organisation is consistent with the Right Bite strategy.

Sponsorship items should:
- be used to enhance educational programs
- be with organisations whose public image, products and services are consistent with the ethos and values of education
- not generate undue pressure on children, parents or schools to purchase particular products or services, or to adopt particular beliefs, attitudes or courses of action
- not involve endorsement of products.

(see DECS Administrative Instructions and Guidelines 85A)

Industry groups often supply sites with merchandise (aprons, hats), equipment (pie warmers, vending machines, menu boards) and point of sale advertising (posters). These can all be considered as advertising and are covered by this strategy. Advertising should be restricted to products that fit within the GREEN or AMBER categories or meal deals prepared by the canteen that are in the GREEN or AMBER category. Generic company advertising should be avoided.

Refer to the DECS eat well in schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines (numbers 2.1–2.4):

2.1 While at school and preschool, learners should eat routinely at scheduled break times.
2.2 Preschool children and primary-aged children should eat in a supervised social environment.
2.3 Schools and preschools should actively promote daily fruit and vegetable consumption.
2.4 Schools and preschools should support frequent drinking of fresh, clean tap water.

Schools and preschools can support the development of healthy food attitudes and habits for children and students by:
- scheduling regular eating times
- ensuring adequate time to eat in a comfortable environment
- supervising eating times for younger children
- promoting daily fruit and vegetable intake
- ensuring access to water for drinking, particularly tap water.

Discuss this within your school or preschool. Are the children and students given adequate time to eat their lunch (supervised for young children)? And do they have somewhere pleasant to eat?
Food related health support planning

Refer to the DECS *eat well sa schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines* (number 5.1):

> ‘Schools and preschools should ensure students and children with medically warranted individual health care needs related to food and nutrition are supported in line with the Department’s health support planning policy. This includes learners who have special dietary requirements. It also includes learners who have a food–related mental health issue.’

**Special dietary requirements**

Some children and students may require special diets for medical reasons. On enrolment, or as the issue arises, parents need to notify the school or preschool. The school or preschool must ensure a Health Support Plan is established for the student, and all staff members involved are aware of this. Schools and preschools should try to meet these needs as far as possible so that all children are included. Any special needs for children with disabilities such as wheelchair access to the canteen should also be considered. Any special dietary requirements recorded in the Health Support Plan, should be communicated to the canteen or food service. Examples of medical conditions that have special dietary requirements include diabetes, coeliac disease and anaphylaxis.

**Anaphylaxis – (severe) food allergy**

Contact with certain foods can be fatal for some people with allergies. The most common triggers of anaphylaxis are: peanuts, cow’s milk, egg, wheat, soy bean, tree nuts (eg cashews), fish and shellfish.

The Department of Education and Children’s Services has information for schools and preschools regarding anaphylaxis. For more information, go to [www.decs.sa.gov.au](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au)

Canteen staff need to be made aware of students with such allergies and familiar with the school’s management strategies for these students.

**Food additives and food intolerances**

Food intolerance is different from food allergy and does not involve the immune system. It occurs when a person has a reaction to either natural or artificial substances in foods or has an enzyme deficiency (such as in lactose intolerance).

Food intolerance results in usually non-life threatening symptoms ranging from behavioural disturbance to bloating and eczema.

If a child has a genuine intolerance to a particular food substance, the parents must notify the school or preschool and discuss the issue with staff (including canteen staff) to determine how the site is able to support the student with this specific requirement. A Health Support Plan may be necessary.

Addressing these factors can go a long way to ensuring adequate food and drinks are consumed at lunchtime to support wellbeing and optimal learning for the rest of the school or preschool day.
Working with families, health services and industry

Refer to the DECS eat well sa schools and preschools healthy eating guidelines (numbers 6.1–6.3):

6.1 Schools and preschools should foster positive communication and relationships with families to support healthy eating outcomes for young people.

6.2 Sites should work with health professionals and services to ensure that educators have up-to-date information about relevant food and nutrition issues and community programs.

6.3 Sites should ensure any partnerships with food industry and related organisations, including sponsorship arrangements, support the Department’s healthy eating guidelines.

This covers mutually supportive links between schools and preschools and the wider community, including parents, local business, government and non-government organisations. Parent involvement in school and preschool fundraising and healthy canteens are two examples of potential partnerships within the school environment.

Good nutrition for children and students:

- improves learning and attention span
- improves physical and psychological wellbeing
- promotes growth and development
- reduces the risk of diet–related health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, stroke, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, dental decay, overweight and obesity.
Implementing *Right Bite* in the school and preschool

Although this section focuses on school canteens the ideas can be translated to other areas in schools and preschools where food is provided.

**Planning and managing a *Right Bite* food supply, including the canteen**

There is more to ensuring that healthy food is supplied than changing the type of foods and drinks that are provided. Success also depends on good management and operational skills, particularly in the school canteen. The process described briefly below shows the steps that can be taken in planning and managing change towards a *Right Bite* school food supply. It is a flexible process that can be tailored to meet the needs of each school and preschool. It can also be used to plan and review food and drink options across the whole school and preschool environment. If the school is currently operating a successful healthy canteen, this process can still be used to reflect on current practice and identify areas that can further support implementation of the *Right Bite* strategy.

**Getting ready**

Before taking action it is important to know what the *Right Bite* strategy is about and communicate this to the whole school or preschool community. It is also recommended that each school and preschool establishes or consolidates a healthy eating (or *Right Bite*) committee to plan and manage the change process. At this stage the committee may choose to develop or review the school or preschool healthy eating policy.

**Assessing the current situation**

The next step is to form a picture of the current food supply situation across the whole school or preschool. This involves identifying all situations where food is prepared or supplied, reviewing the canteen menu, looking at the management are also covered. The committee needs to identify food is supplied and determining areas that may need improvement. The *Right Bite* Food Supply Checklist on page 82 is designed to assist the committee in this process.

**Developing actions and alternatives**

The committee can now decide on a plan of action. The *Right Bite* Food Supply Action Planner provided in section 4 (page 92), will prompt discussion and provide a template to record decisions made by the committee. These will relate to the areas for improvement identified in the previous step. Important menu planning considerations and practical tips around designing a healthy menu are also covered. The committee needs to identify the best way to introduce new foods to meet the needs of the school or preschool.

**Getting on with the job**

The organisation of staff, money, food and promotions all play a very important part in a successful school canteen. Section 5 provides a range of ideas to streamline organisation and workflow, manage stock, improve money management, promote healthier food choices and attract and keep paid staff and volunteers.

**Maintaining the momentum**

It is always important to reflect on progress and to seek and incorporate feedback. From here further actions and alternatives may need to be developed and applied followed by further evaluation. A *Right Bite* food supply is not static. It will be important to maintain the momentum to continue providing healthier choices to students.
In summary, what is a healthy school or preschool food supply?

A healthy school and preschool food supply:
- makes it easy for children and students to choose healthy snacks and meals
- offers a variety of nutritious foods and drinks
- promotes water as the drink of preference
- promotes foods and drinks that are consistent with the Dietary guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia
- can be an avenue for consistent and continual health education
- complements and integrates the diverse elements of the school and preschool curriculum
- is representative of the foods of the community
- involves students, parents and the wider community
- is an integral part of the entire healthy school environment
- uses non-food rewards
- encourages non-food fundraising or fundraising with foods from the GREEN category
- maintains a supportive eating environment
- promotes nutrition education to parents and the wider community
- is culturally sensitive and inclusive.