

Information for canteens regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

We are acting on the advice of the WA Departments of Health and Education and in consultation with WA Council of State School Organisations (WACSSO) to take the necessary precautions for schools and staff.

Seek advice from the principal and/or employer (e.g. P&C) at all times.

Health and safety

We remind all canteens, cafeterias and food services to ensure appropriate [hand washing](#) procedures are in place and followed by all staff and volunteers.

Schools have been advised to cancel all non-essential meetings and gatherings on school grounds e.g. assemblies, sports carnival etc. At this stage, canteens should continue to trade and follow advice from their principal.

Steps to consider in the canteen

Communication and preparation is the key. For example:

- Ensure appropriate food safety and hygiene procedures are being followed in the canteen. If you, or staff/volunteers, are unwell do not go to work
- Communicate with the school community through your regular channels about the canteen e.g. business as usual; reiterate the canteen is making changes to the menu and/or ordering process
- If you are having trouble providing the normal menu:
 - o Consider reducing the menu to only 2-3 items per day
 - o Regularly communicate with students and parents about menu changes; what will be available the next day
 - o If fresh ingredients are unavailable can they be replaced with pre-prepared meals
 - o Confirm if suppliers are expecting any supply issues
 - o Talk to other schools in the area and where appropriate, perhaps combine orders (arrange pick-up and be mindful of temperature control)
- Review stock on-hand, consider what could be run down; use by dates; what could be made in bulk and frozen
- Review your contract:
 - o Consider accrued leave (if applicable)
 - o Provision for professional development and training (if applicable)
 - o Talk to your employer
 - o Useful information available from [Fairwork](#) and [Department of Commerce](#) (Wageline).

Avoid:

- Panic buying for the canteen and bulk buying
- Using perishable items donated by families e.g. baked muffins, eggs, soup, meat products (accepting non-perishable items e.g. flour, rice, canned goods is acceptable)
- Substituting unhealthy ingredients i.e. if you cannot access 99% fruit juice (amber), do not replace with cordial (red).

School closures

If a WA school has to close due to a confirmed case, it will be on advice from the WA Health Department's Chief Health Officer.

The Chief Health Officer will, if there has been a positive COVID-19 test result in your school, close your school temporarily while assessment and tracing of exposure is conducted. A thorough school clean will then be carried out to make the school safe for the return of students and staff.

In this situation the Department of Education, Association for Independent Schools WA, or Catholic Education WA will work with individual school principals to provide direct advice and support regarding the closure process and communication.

If this occurs canteens are encouraged to consider the following:

Communication Based on advice from your principal:

- Work with your employer to notify other canteen staff and canteen volunteers
- Work with the school to inform students, parents and staff about menu/ordering changes when the canteen reopens (if applicable)
- Notify suppliers to ensure standing orders are cancelled or postponed
- Review expected canteen deliveries.

Stock

If possible:

- Carry out a stock take before the closure; taking photos can assist
- Consolidate stock e.g. if you have multiple fridges/freezers, move stock into one fridge/freezer; and switch off others/defrost freezer
- Perishable items:
 - o Distribute to staff, volunteers, families as appropriate
 - o Store properly to extend use e.g. freeze bread; decant flavoured milk into ice cube trays; cut up fresh fruit and freeze.

Training

Make the most of time away from the canteen and complete online training:

- [FOCIS School Canteen Online Training](#): a comprehensive online training course that is nationally appropriate and aims to increase the capacity and skills of people involved in operating school canteens across Australia.
- [All about allergens](#): a free online course for everyone working in food service, from Canteen supervisor to volunteers.
- Ensure you are up to date and complying with the Department of Education's *Healthy Food and Drink policy*
 - o [Traffic Light Training](#): includes menu planning, scope of the policy, whole school approach, categorising food and drinks etc.
 - o [FoodSafe Food Handler training](#): often available free of charge through your local council website; or Environmental Health Australia (fee applies).

Record keeping

Canteens are very busy businesses which means sometimes record keeping is not always a priority. Now could be the time to:

- Update recipe costing sheets
- Review the pricing formula
- Update or develop volunteer orientation information
- Templates such as temperature control record, daily tally sheets, stocktake
- Templates and tips on the [WASCA website](#).

Menu and recipe revision

Many schools introduce a new menu for Term 2 based on seasonal produce and warming options. Start planning, for example:

- Create a new layout, design, add pictures; [templates available](#)
- Contact suppliers and compare prices, delivery fees/days etc.
- Research new recipe ideas e.g.
 - o [WASCA website](#) recipes are colour coded green and amber
 - o [LiveLighter](#) have quick seasonal recipes (good for home and school)
 - o [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) lots of tasty ideas for canteens
 - o Use the [WASCA Facebook page](#) to ask other canteens what they are planning for winter
- Recipe testing at home, based on available ingredients
 - o If meat is in short supply, bulk up recipes with lentils, grated vegetables
 - o Use one dish in multiple ways e.g. savoury mince/savoury lentils could be made into tacos, cottage pie, spaghetti bolognaise
- Send recipes and the new winter menu to WASCA for a free review wasca@education.wa.edu.au

Remember, if the school and canteen closes, this will be temporary. Consider long term planning and keep in contact with WASCA for support.

Further advice and support:

[WA Department of Health](#)

[WA Department of Education](#)

[WA Council of State School Organisations](#) -for P&C's