

# Starting a new canteen/food service

So, your school has decided to investigate opening a canteen/food service - this is a great way to encourage healthy eating amongst students and the wider community. To ensure the food service is a financially viable business we encourage you to consider the following steps.

## School community support



It is imperative to consider the needs and wants of the entire school community.

Starting a school canteen/food service requires the support and commitment of parents, students but more importantly, your Principal and parent body.

Facilitate a meeting with your school Principal and the parent body to discuss what sort of food service your school should have. For example:

- onsite canteen/food service operated by the parent body; or incorporated school board
- management contract
- licensing agreement
- local arrangements with external providers such as another school or shop.

Download: [Food service options for schools](#) and [Incorporated School Councils and Boards: FAQs](#)

## Form a Canteen Committee

This is a good time to form a Canteen Committee, including parents interested in being part of the decision making process for all planning. You should also consider inviting school staff, the school health nurse and perhaps a number of senior students. The Canteen Committee may also form the core of your parent volunteers in the canteen/food service.

Download: [Canteen committee terms of reference](#) template

## Survey the school

Conducting a survey can be a great way of ensuring you are meeting the needs of the school community. Find out how many days parents/staff would like the canteen/food service to operate; spending capacity; who may be willing to volunteer; and popular menu ideas. Consider offering an incentive for completing the survey e.g. raffle draw for a healthy food hamper.

Now that you know the school community will support the canteen/food service the planning can continue. Keep in mind, if there is limited support at this stage, you can always park the idea for a couple of terms and then revisit your options.

Download: [Canteen survey for students, parents and staff](#)



Department of Health  
Department of Education



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## WASCA Membership

Members receive discounts when purchasing resources and are offered reduced registration fees to attend professional development events and training. Members also receive FREE menu assessments and the opportunity to attend and vote at four general meetings per year which often include guest presentations on relevant topics.

Check: [WASCA membership benefits and form](#)

## Create an action plan

Once you have collated your survey results and are able to gauge the needs and wants of the school you can create an 'action plan'.

Identify tasks, develop a checklist, timeline, and delegate jobs amongst your canteen committee/parent body. Schedule regular meetings to check in with each other. This will keep the momentum going to achieve all tasks leading to the opening of your canteen/food service. Your 'action plan' may include but is not limited to:

- drafting of a canteen policy
- auditing of canteen facilities and equipment
- nominating/employing a canteen supervisor
- completing relevant training
- menu planning
- a plan for launching the canteen.



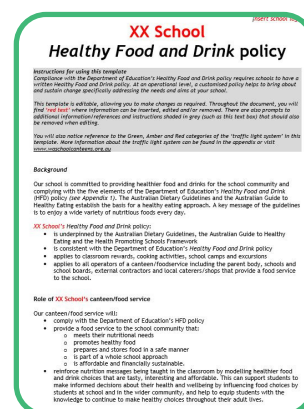
Planning and organisation is the key to successfully opening your canteen/food service; communicate clearly with everyone involved and keep your Principal informed. If you plan to employ staff, contact [WACSSO](#) for insurance information and their 'Guide to employing staff' as well as [Wageline](#) and/or [Fairwork](#) about obligations, responsibilities and wages.

Download: [Action plan template](#)

## Develop a canteen/food service policy

A policy is a formal document adopted and endorsed by the school community that sets out the aims and principles of the canteen/food service. It can help to bring about and sustain change and provides guidance for all food and drinks offered in the school setting. Part of compliance with the Department of Education's *Healthy Food and Drink* (HFD) policy requires schools to have a written canteen/food service policy. WASCA is available to review draft policies.

Download: [Sample policy template](#)



## Register with the local council

The canteen/food service must be registered with the local council as a food business. They will also be able to tell you what level of food preparation is permitted in your canteen/food service i.e. if you are permitted to prepare food from scratch with raw produce, such as lean meat.

The Environmental Health Officer at the council is a great resource for all your food safety and hygiene concerns and you can expect a yearly inspection from them – as the proprietor, you can always contact them if these visits are not occurring.

Reach out: [to your local council](#)



## Audit canteen/food service facilities

Does your canteen/food service have all necessary appliances and equipment to operate?

Take an inventory of fridges/freezers, cookware, crockery and utensils to see what your canteen/food service may be lacking before the doors open. Some suppliers provide equipment (e.g. fridges, freezers) as long as you are stocking their products. Other missing items such as spoons, cups etc. may be donated by the school community provided they are in good condition. Small appliances such as blenders and toasted sandwich machines must be purchased new and preferably be commercial grade to ensure warranties are not void.

Consider: applying for a [Robin Bromley Visionary Grant](#) to help with large items

## Training and resources

Compliance with the Department of Education's HFD policy requires the person responsible for running the canteen/foodservice to complete Traffic light training and Foodsafe® Food Handler training or its equivalent. It is important to complete this training before menu planning begins.

- Traffic light training must be completed by the canteen supervisor and is highly recommended for parent body and canteen committee members
- All paid and volunteer staff must complete Foodsafe® Food Handler training or its equivalent.

To further increase skills and knowledge, we also recommend:

- [School canteen online training](#), offered by the Federation of Canteens in Schools
- Financial management training, offered by WASCA
- [All about Allergens](#), offered by the National Allergy Strategy.

There are several 'must have' resources for your canteen/food service such as:

- Star Choice™ Buyers Guide to assist in sourcing suppliers of canteen approved registered products, colour coded 'green' and 'amber'. Posted to every school twice per year
- Canteen Cuisine cookbook which provides approved, easy to prepare, nutritious recipes. Contact WASCA for a copy
- Recipes, fact sheets, Volunteer welcome kit and much more download-able for free from the WASCA website

Check: the WASCA [training page](#) and [website for all the resources](#)

## Menu planning

Traffic light training will have provided you with all of the information you need to create a healthy and interesting menu. By utilising suppliers in the Star Choice™ Buyers Guide and your enthusiastic Canteen Committee, putting together a menu should be fun and easy.



Things to consider:

- Do you have enough people required to make all the items?
- How will items be packaged?
- Is the menu taking advantage of seasonal produce?
- Is the menu compliant with the *Healthy Food and Drink* policy?
- Does the menu contain specials?
- How will the menu be distributed to the school community? Marketing is essential.

Once the menu is done send it to WASCA for a FREE check, we will provide you with your green percentage, recommendations to increase the number of healthy choices and streamlining if required.

You will also need to develop a pricing formula specific to your school to ensure you cover all overheads associated with operating the canteen/food service.

Download: [Recipe costing sheet](#), [Setting menu prices fact sheet](#) and [much more](#)

## Launch day

The launch of your canteen/food service is an exciting time! Ensure the whole school community is involved by opening the doors on a school assembly day or plan a special celebration to mark this momentous occasion. Not only will this generate excitement amongst students, parents will want to be part of it too, so hopefully it will generate lots of volunteers!

Canteen/food services are an integral part of the school community, not only do they provide students with nutritious food throughout the day and the opportunity to learn to make healthy food choices, they are a place where parents of the school community can come together to socialise whilst doing their bit for the school.



Strive to make the canteen/food service a place devoid of negativity and gossip, and committed to providing healthy food and drink choices for staff and students.

Check: [Harvest Case Studies](#) for some great inspiration

## Review and evaluate

Part of the original action plan should include reviewing and evaluating the canteen/food service. Consider if the canteen is financially viable; that the menu is achievable and popular; and the pricing is sufficient to cover operating costs.

Call: WASCA 08 9264 4999 or email [wasca@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:wasca@education.wa.edu.au) at anytime for assistance