

Tips for a Healthy and Profitable School Canteen

There's a common myth that a healthy canteen won't be a financially successful canteen – but that couldn't be further from the truth. Get the low down on how to make healthy changes in your school canteen without affecting the bottom line.

The Financial Facts on Healthy Canteens

There's plenty of research showing that healthy canteens can make a profit, or at least break even. Just take a look at these results:

Healthy Canteen Menus:

A 2016 study showed 82% of WA school canteens broke even or made a profit with healthy canteen menus.

Promote Healthy Options:

A 2017 study of 10 NSW schools showed that when healthier options were actively promoted there was no significant difference in the average weekly canteen revenue.

Queensland Tuckshops:

In 2018, a QLD study found menus with a greater proportion of **GREEN** items were more likely to make a profit, and had a greater value of sales.

Gold

"The secret – it's no secret really, fresh healthy food served with a smile and an inclusive attitude. No one is turned away from the Canteen (called Healthy Hut), all dietary requirements are catered for and staff, students and parents are welcomed. "

- Canteen Supervisor, Armadale Primary School

Tips for Success

Follow these tips to promote healthy food and drinks and set your canteen up for financial success.

Make healthier items your new best sellers by using the 4 Ps of marketing:



- **Product:** Is the item desirable? Is it tasty, attractive, with a catchy name?
- **Price:** Is it affordable, and is it good value compared to other items?
- **Place:** How do families and students access it, e.g. via lunch orders, over the counter, every day or on special days only?
- **Promotion:** How is it promoted to students and families, e.g. via signs at the canteen, newsletter, canteen menu, school social media?

Be a savvy shopper



- Buy ingredients in bulk, and/or when they are on special.
- Find cheaper products and/or brands.
- Purchase fresh produce that is in season. It is tastier and cheaper!

Take the time to get it right



- Some schools update their canteen all at once, and others introduce changes slowly. Take small steps, and measure results, such as replacing one item at a time with a healthier alternative.
- Give new items time to gain momentum before deciding if they are a good seller. Trial new recipes and get feedback before adding them to the menu.

Don't go it alone



- Engage students and staff to make them part of the changes. For example, hold a naming competition for new items, conduct a survey to get new menu ideas, and use activities in the classroom to invent new menu items.
- To get school-wide support, communicate changes (and why you are making them) to everyone at your school.
- Share any results from surveys and recipe trials with school leadership to get their support and ongoing commitment to having a healthy canteen.

This text is adapted from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's Breaking Even and Beyond factsheet. Copyright © State of Victoria.