

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

Strategies to support a whole-school approach to healthy eating

Schools

What is a whole-school approach to healthy eating?

A whole-school approach to healthy eating brings together school leadership staff, food services, students, families and the broader community to promote healthy eating. Everyone has a role to play.

This can be achieved by:

- integrating healthy eating into planning and curriculum
- developing a supportive culture and environment
- engaging the whole-school community

The Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy should be implemented as part of a whole-school approach to healthy eating.

Use the suggestions below to start working together with your school community to promote healthy eating.

Healthy Places Healthy Futures takes a whole-school approach to healthy eating including; creating a healthier environment, building on existing health initiatives and encouraging leadership. By embedding healthy food practices into everyday school life, students, staff and families can thrive and develop lifelong healthy habits.



School leadership

School principals and school councils can support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- leading and supporting the Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy in all areas of school operations (e.g. school policies, food services, classroom activities, fundraising, special events and sport days).
- integrating strategies into school plans to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.
- creating a school environment that supports healthy eating such as ensuring water is freely available and the canteen provides healthy options.
- informing and encouraging the school community to be involved in planning, delivery and evaluation of healthy eating activities, policies and events.
- role modelling positive healthy eating behaviours and attitudes.

Key resources

- Encourage curriculum activities that encourage nutrition education
- Share updates in the school newsletter using our newsletter insert ideas
- Learn how to provide healthy foods and drinks in your school through our online training course Healthy school food services.

School staff

School staff can support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- including age-appropriate food and nutrition education in the school curriculum, across learning areas and year levels. See VCAA curriculum framework for more information.
- providing opportunities for students to develop and apply knowledge and skills that promote healthy eating.
- leading and assisting with health promotion and healthy eating activities in the school.
- role modelling positive healthy eating behaviours and attitudes.

Ideas

- Provide opportunities for students to develop practical skills such as growing food, budgeting, shopping, preparing and cooking meals, and trying new foods.



School food services

School food services can support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- providing foods and drinks in-line with the Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy (e.g. ensuring healthy foods and drinks are always available as the main choice when foods and drinks are provided).
- trialling new nutritious recipes and culturally diverse foods and drinks and gathering feedback from the school community.
- presenting nutritious foods and drinks in attractive and appetising ways e.g. adding meal deals or themed meals. See Promotional ideas to boost canteen sales.
- focus on making healthy menu items the main options available and promoted across the menu. Promote the items to the school community via posters, noticeboards, school announcements, newsletter articles and on the school website.

Students

Students can support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- being active participants in the school's nutrition-related activities, both in and out of the classroom (i.e. providing feedback on the canteen menu, getting involved in trialling and planning new nutritious menu options, participating in food-related activities).
- role modelling positive healthy eating behaviours and attitudes.
- getting involved in food and nutrition activities at home (e.g. helping the family with budgeting, food shopping and meal preparation).



Families

Families can support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- role modelling positive healthy eating attitudes and behaviours.
- involve children in food and nutrition activities at home (e.g. budgeting, shopping, meal and lunchbox preparation).
- provide nutritious foods and drinks in lunchboxes.
- assist the school to plan, deliver and evaluate healthy eating initiatives.

Key resource

- Keep families and community members informed about changes in your newletter using this template
- Visit our Healthy lunchboxes resource for more information

Community

Schools can work with local community and business groups to support a whole-school approach to healthy eating by:

- connecting with the community to access equipment, resources and prizes (e.g. non-food items, discount vouchers and services).
- connecting with local fruit and vegetable retailers to support your healthy eating messages across the school. This could include a school visit by the retailers, or an excursion to a local market.
- exploring seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Key resources

- Vic Kids Eat Well
- MarketFresh
- National Nutrition Foundation 'What's in Season' poster

Further information

For further information on creating healthy environments for learning and adopting a whole-school approach to healthy eating visit:

- Vic Kids Eat Well
- Smiles 4 Miles
- Healthy Places Healthy Futures
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation
- National Nutrition Foundation
- freshSNAP
- FoodChecker
- 'Healthy school food services' online learning course



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