



Mount Rogers Primary School

Greening the canteen menu

After signing up to the ACT Government's Fresh Tastes service in mid-2014, Mount Rogers Primary School in Melba launched a brand new, and nutritious, canteen menu early in 2015.

"We are slowly phasing out the less healthy options in our canteen as both the school and the parents want to promote healthier options to the children," said Casey-Anne Langler, kindergarten teacher and the school's coordinator for the Fresh Tastes program.

As with many successful school canteens, Mount Rogers rely on a regular roster of willing volunteers to make things run smoothly, and with the help of the Fresh Tastes program, the canteen team has put in the extra effort to review the nutritional value of the food and drink options.

"Luckily, we have a well-balanced team of parents and canteen staff dedicated to ensuring the canteen moves to healthier options," said Casey-Anne. "They have been the ones coming up with the ideas and implementing the changes."

With training for canteen staff through the Healthy Kids Association, and the drive of parents, Mount Rogers Primary School assessed the canteen items against the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines' traffic light system. Interestingly, they found that just changing a brand helped to align some of their items with the green and amber requirements.

"We also did a survey directly to the children to see what they would want and what they may be willing to try."

"We are testing and refining this term by introducing new food options as special events to assess how they go," said Casey-Anne.

This approach will allow for a phasing out of the older, less nutritious options while the healthier choices are introduced.

The new menu, along with Water on Tap drink bottles for all students to keep on their desks, newly installed water refill stations available in the playgrounds, a vegetable garden and linkages to the work of the school's Green Team, is helping to bring Mount Rogers' healthier food and drink culture alive.

"Staff are also receiving traffic light training through Nutrition Australia ACT so there aren't any mixed messages and everyone is clear across the school about our expectations."

Mount Rogers regularly shares plans and ideas about their Fresh Tastes activities throughout the school community on their Facebook page, via newsletters and at their weekly 'Fruit and Fitness' sessions for the whole school.

"We are making a big shift in how we approach all activities to make sure healthier options are available," said Casey-Anne.

Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved.