



Radford College – Junior School

Taste testing for canteen success

Getting everyone on board to support a healthier canteen has resulted in a popular, nutritious range of options for the students at Radford College’s Junior School canteen.

After signing up to Fresh Tastes in 2014, Radford’s canteen staff attended a menu planning workshop with Nutrition Australia ACT, and investigated ways to market healthier options effectively. They then developed and introduced a new canteen menu – with no ‘red’ items.

The Fresh Tastes team sought feedback from families via a parent survey.

“We had our first menu assessment undertaken by Nutrition Australia ACT with good feedback on ways to improve our menu,” said Linda Oakman, manager of the Radford Canteen.

Now the school offers a broader range of green items and limits the number of days on which the amber items are available.

The school found that the changes needed to be supported by other actions, including displaying posters to help educate students about healthy choices. The canteen also deliberately displays the healthier food and drink options in a colourful and attractive way.

“When we introduce a new menu item, such as soup, we endeavour to provide free tastings for students, which has been a successful way to get them to come back to buy that product,” said Linda.

“We also deliberately put small healthier items into a cheaper price bracket so it encourages students to purchase these items rather than less healthy options.”

Offering green and amber categorisation on both the online ordering system, Flexischools, and the hard copy menu has helped to further embed the traffic light system with students, staff and parents.

The canteen now makes most of their food products from scratch without pre-prepared sauces and their freshly-made hot meal options are proving very popular.

The healthy options are increasingly being provided to teachers at staff morning teas and at school events like the Mother’s Day breakfast and cross country carnival.

While it takes commitment, patience and time to make the changes, Radford’s Junior School has deemed their Fresh Tastes approach a success.

“It is a worthwhile service and you receive the support you need,” said the Radford Fresh Tastes Action Group.

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

