



### Weetangera Primary School

## Schools healthy food journey

**When transitioning to healthier options in the school canteen (before the ACT Public Schools Food and Drink Policy was introduced), Weetangera Primary School decided to eliminate the red foods from their menu gradually.**

“We wanted to ease the school community into healthier menu choices,” explained Kerrie Sun, Weetangera Primary School’s Canteen Manager.

“Over a year or two we slowly reduced the red food and drinks, then we eliminated them all together,” said Kerrie. “For example, we limited the sale of chocolate frogs to two per person, then reduced that to one per person before phasing them out.”

“We also replaced the lollies with dried fruits like apricots and pineapple. We focused on substituting sweet treats with healthier options so students could still purchase something with their small change.”

The canteen deleted their last red food item from the menu a couple of years ago, and their measured approach has enabled the canteen to stay open three days a week.

“We offer a good variety of snacks over the counter including cheese and crackers, custard pots, cheese melts, homemade pikelets and muffins, popcorn, carrot sticks and seasonal fruit,” Kerrie said.

The Weetangera canteen is well supported with two paid staff members and parent volunteers, plus a dedicated canteen committee of about 10 parents.

Focusing on the Food For Sale action area has allowed Kerrie and the canteen staff to access free canteen support and advice about the canteen menu from Fresh Tastes partners, such as the ACT Nutrition Support Service (run by Nutrition Australia ACT).

“The committee regularly meet during the term to discuss ideas for menu items and upcoming special events,” said Kerrie. “I also call Nutrition Australia ACT with my questions and use some of their recipes.”

The quality of the offerings makes a big difference, with most of the menu being homemade. Kerrie and the staff create everything from delicious pizza, to hot jacket potatoes, salad boxes and homemade bolognaise, which is their biggest seller. Plus the canteen prepares inventive platters for the students and staff for special events such as Harmony Day and Bastille Day.

“This term I’ve offered a special lunch every second Thursday,” explained Kerrie. “We’ve had homemade soup, lasagne, honey soy chicken nibbles and fried rice on our quieter days to generate extra income, which has proved very popular. This has boosted our orders by an extra 40–50 orders on that day.”

**Weetangera Primary School’s canteen has demonstrated that with the right approach and ongoing support, healthy food can still be attractive, delicious and good value.**

*Fresh Tastes is open to all primary schools across Canberra. Contact the Fresh Tastes team for information about how your school can get involved. Fresh Tastes is part of the ACT Government’s Healthy Weight Initiative supporting a healthy, active and productive community.*