

# Section 2 Getting ready

Establish or consolidate a Smart Choices committee

Get informed

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The active role of students



# Getting ready

Before taking action it is important to have a clear understanding of what is required and communicate this to all key people. There are a number of steps a school can take to get ready to implement Smart Choices.

They include:

- establish a Smart Choices committee
- get informed
- communicate the Smart Choices strategy to the whole school community.

## Key elements of success

- A Smart Choices committee, representative of the school community, is active and ready to plan and manage change in the school, including the tuckshop.
- The committee is well informed about the Smart Choices strategy and has accessed all relevant resources, including websites and support organisations.
- The committee regularly communicates information about Smart Choices and the school's plans for change to the school community.



## Establish or consolidate a Smart Choices committee

For many schools, moving to Smart Choices will mean a number of changes to the foods and drinks supplied to students and to the way tuckshops operate. This process is best planned and managed by a committee.

The Smart Choices committee structure should have representation from all sections of the school community. This allows the views and ideas of different sections of the school community to be considered and the responsibility for various aspects of management to be shared.

The Smart Choices committee should consist of:

- the principal
- the tuckshop convenor
- parent representatives
- tuckshop volunteers
- student representatives
- a member of the school staff.

Many schools may already have a committee that can manage the change process. This is often a subcommittee of the Parents and Citizens' Association.

Once a Smart Choices committee has been established, members can be elected to fill certain roles. These may vary according to the needs in the school. All committees require:

- a chairperson — responsible for running committee meetings
- a secretary — responsible for issuing meeting agendas, taking minutes of meetings, and publishing minutes according to agreed procedures.

## Role of the Smart Choices committee

The role of the Smart Choices committee is to oversee the implementation of the Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools across all school activities.

The Smart Choices committee may:

- develop a strategy for communicating Smart Choices to the whole school community
- develop an action plan for the implementation of Smart Choices

- determine whether the school intends to supply RED foods or drinks to students on no more than two occasions per term, and which activities in the school this will involve
- discuss how the strategy applies to a range of current school activities such as the tuckshop, fundraising, camps, classroom activities and excursions
- encourage communication between different groups in the school regarding implementation of Smart Choices.

## Get informed

The Smart Choices committee needs a good understanding of the requirements of the Smart Choices strategy. There are several resources and organisations that can assist.

- *Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*  
This *Smart Choices Tool Kit* should be read in conjunction with *Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*. A CD-ROM accompanies the strategy and includes a copy of the strategy, the *Occasional Food and Drink Criteria Table*, Food and Drink Spectrum and a presentation for use by schools and Parents and Citizens' Associations. The presentation outlines why healthy food and drink supply is important, the reasons behind the strategy, and the requirements in relation to the foods and drinks that should be available in the school environment. The presentation should be viewed by the committee as a way of improving understanding about Smart Choices.  
These resources can be downloaded at:  
[www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy)
- Queensland Association of School Tuckshops (QAST)  
QAST is a non-government organisation dedicated to the promotion and support of Queensland tuckshops and school communities in their endeavours to offer nutritious, hygienic and economically viable food services. QAST can provide information on healthy food promotion, healthy fundraising ideas, food safety and canteen design, tuckshop management, policies and procedures and volunteer recruitment.
- Nutrition Australia  
Nutrition Australia operates a Nutrition in Schools Advisory Service which can provide up-to-date nutrition information via newsletter and a telephone inquiry service. Nutrition Australia also works closely with the food industry helping them to produce healthy, nutritious foods suitable for use in school tuckshops.
- Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations (QCPCA)  
The QCPCA can provide assistance to individual Parents and Citizens' associations. The association has developed a *P&C Operations Manual* that includes a section on retail operations including tuckshops. This manual also includes a section on food safety for tuckshops.
- Queensland Health  
Queensland Health can provide information about healthy living, including nutrition, physical activity and food safety.  
[www.foodsafetymatters.gov.au](http://www.foodsafetymatters.gov.au) is a dedicated food safety website aimed at schools.
- Smart Choices Education Queensland District contacts  
Education Queensland has a Smart Choices contact in each of its districts. To find out who your Education Queensland Smart Choices district contact is visit:  
[www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy)
- Tuckshop network meetings  
These are held in many areas around Queensland. They offer the opportunity for tuckshop staff and volunteers to share ideas, learn about new foods and discuss issues relating to tuckshop management. The Queensland Association of School Tuckshops (QAST) can provide information on meeting locations.

## Communicate with the whole school community

Look for opportunities to communicate with the broader school community once the Smart Choices committee is familiar with the strategy. The whole school should be kept informed and provided with opportunities to contribute and provide feedback along the way.

There are many opportunities to inform, discuss and answer questions about the strategy. For example:

- run an information evening for parents, carers and other interested school community members
- hold lunchtime, student-run information sessions about the strategy

- conduct information sessions for tuckshop volunteers
- put snippets about the strategy and general nutrition information in school newsletters
- include information about the strategy and links to websites with more information on the school Internet and intranet site
- list tuckshops as a standing item of business on the agenda of parent, staff and school council meetings
- talk to the school's student representative council about the changes
- keep everyone informed at school assemblies
- photocopy and laminate the Food and Drink Spectrum and Occasional Food and Drink Criteria Table and put these up in the tuckshop to remind everyone of the requirements of the strategy
- keep local suppliers and distributors informed about the strategy and the changes the school is making.

**Case Study**

**Windaroo State School**

Windaroo State School used the information from Smart Choices to put a nutrition article in the school newsletter. This included information on the appropriate serves of different food groups required by children aged 5–12 years. They also provided some lunch box ideas to encourage parents to carefully consider the types of foods and drinks that are sent to school.

Some tasty lunch box combinations:

- Pita wrap (with hummus, grated cheese, carrot and snow pea sprouts), frozen fruit juice, mandarin, slice of raisin bread
- Homemade pasta salad (with corn, capsicum, shallots and peas), dried apricots, strawberries and a pikelet
- Chicken, mayonnaise and celery sandwich, fresh fruit salad, cheese slice and rice cakes
- Vegetable noodle salad, fruit scone, frozen milk drink, dried fruit and nut mix

## The active role of students

Students want to be involved in a meaningful way in school decision making. They are partners in the change process and should be on the Smart Choices

committee. There are many ways students can actively support and promote the Smart Choices strategy.

Some ideas to involve the student body include:

- Students review the tuckshop menu and develop ideas for an alternate menu or for additions to the existing menu. These ideas could be presented and considered at a committee meeting. See page 18, Assessing the tuckshop menu.
- Run a competition among students to name a new food that is going to be introduced into the school tuckshop. The prize on offer for the most creative name could be one week's free lunches.
- The student body could decide on theme days to be held throughout the year. Ask the students to name the day and select foods and drinks to be sold that fit within the strategy. They could also be responsible for advertising the day.
- Run taste-testing to trial new products before they are introduced. Use a different year group each time and ask students for feedback on taste, suitability and suggested price.
- Promote new food choices or special days at school assemblies.
- Students could develop and market foods that would be suitable for sale in the school tuckshop. These ideas could inform the choices the tuckshop makes.
- Design boards to advertise specials or a colourful menu board to promote the new tuckshop menu.
- Develop answers to a set of frequently asked questions about the strategy. These could be displayed in the school tuckshop, added to a school intranet page or put into the school newsletter.

### Check your progress

- A Smart Choices committee is functioning and working towards implementing the Smart Choices strategy.
- The committee has collected and assessed all relevant resources to assist them in the implementation process and has connected with support organisations.
- The committee is communicating about the Smart Choices strategy with the school community on a regular basis.

**TIP** Use the PowerPoint presentation from *Smart Choices* as part of your information sessions.

