



## A Healthy School Canteen snapshot: Northern Beaches Secondary College, Manly Selective Campus

*Focus: a school that has been operating a healthy canteen for over six years. It is an excellent example of a healthy school canteen with an interesting and innovative menu and regular volunteer support.*

### Background

Manly Campus is a co-educational selective high school for students in Years 7 to 12. It is one of five campuses of the Northern Beaches Secondary College. With an enrolment of 790 students, the school draws from a wide area due to its academically selective nature.



### Canteen service

The school canteen is run by the Parents and Citizens' Association and it employs one canteen manager three days a week and two part time assistants. The canteen is open for breakfast from 7.30am to cater for staff and students who are involved in before school activities and it closes after lunch.

The canteen committee meets twice a term and oversees the running of the canteen. New products, pricing and staffing issues are all discussed at the meetings and the canteen committee provides regular reports and updates to the Parents and Citizens' Association.



The canteen manager, Sue Sample, has great support from a number of volunteers. This is partly in response to the 2007 volunteer drive at the Year 7 orientation day where the canteen set up a fresh food display showing food offered at the school canteen. Interested parents came to talk to committee members and sign up for canteen support.

Volunteers are sent an introductory letter early in Term 1 which gives a general orientation and overview of canteen procedures. It also includes an overview of food handling and hygiene expectations and who to call if unable to attend a rostered duty day. All

volunteers are given orientation on their first day and this time is greatly appreciated. A volunteer's dinner for all supporters including the canteen helpers is organised at the end of each year by the P&C.

A number of local suppliers are used and food is prepared fresh on the premises where possible. Students are encouraged to order their lunch before school commences.

### What's on the menu?

The menu is dominated by a wide variety of healthy GREEN foods with many choices available to cater for a range of appetites and tastes. Fresh fruit smoothies are popular for breakfast along with a variety of raisin and fruit breads.



Recess snacks include hommus or spicy capsicum dip and pita chips (organised through a local supplier), yoghurt, low fat mousse, small muffins and fruit salad.

Lunch orders are filled daily for falafel rolls, a variety of wraps, lean meat hamburgers with salad and toasted sandwiches. Students can also purchase sandwiches, sushi, dumplings and hot pasta and rice dishes over the counter.

The drink fridge is well stocked with water, milk drinks and small juices. All prices are clearly marked, with water and milk placed at eye level.

Soup, rice and pasta dishes are popular in the winter months and wraps and falafels are steady all year round. Chicken laksa, stuffed potatoes and pumpkin, sage and fetta risotto are always great sellers. A local supplier has been sourced for the base ingredients of some of these dishes and the canteen adds a variety of fresh ingredients. The supplier gives the canteen a user's guide which has fresh and healthy recipe ideas and suggested mark ups and profit margins.



Up to 60 lunch orders can be filled in a day and the queues for purchasing food that has not been ordered can be long. An efficient work flow plan developed by the canteen manager ensures that all students are served quickly. The students are happy with the food and service and even the volunteers look forward to lunch when coming to work in the canteen.

An example of one of the school's healthy menus has been provided on the link below.

<http://www.manlyselective.nsw.edu.au/aboutus/documents/Canteen.pdf>

## Promotion and marketing of healthy GREEN foods



Foods are cleverly marketed and promoted. With names for meals such as *Munch and Lunch foods* and *Winter Warmers*, students are interested to see what they are.

Product placement is an important part of food promotion. Pasta, rice paper wraps, fruit salad and sushi are all placed in fridges that sit on the front benches of the canteen. The food items and prices are clearly marked on the doors of the fridges.

Specials are promoted by placing posters outside the canteen. A canteen menu is included in the school newsletter each term as well as on the school's and P&C's web site.

The SRC and the canteen committee meet annually to discuss proposed new menu items to be offered at the canteen. This has been an effective way to promote the canteen to the students. Consultation is always appreciated and during this time of the year students have been overheard saying to each other, "It's pretty good for a school canteen!".

## Challenges and Achievements

Sue has been running the canteen for six years according to healthy diet principles following the *Healthy School Canteen Strategy*. The principal and school community are very supportive, and the transition was relatively easy. The challenge of cutting out all RED food was easily achieved by simply not re-ordering when things ran out. Students accepted the changes because there was an abundance of interesting and tasty foods in their place. The key to a successful transition was to have plenty of alternatives ready. New students sometimes request foods that have been removed from the menu and these issues are discussed with the SRC.

A new challenge for Sue and the canteen committee is to get more information out to parents and the wider community about the importance of a healthy canteen and offering healthy food choices to children and adolescents. This is something they would like to address in the future through newsletters and presentations at school community events.

## Promoting healthy eating beyond the canteen

The SRC has participated in local market research for healthy food catering companies that supply their school canteen. Student ideas and opinions have been used to inform new product lines for school canteens that meet the *Healthy School Canteen Strategy* guidelines for GREEN and AMBER foods.

Nutrition and healthy eating is also promoted in the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) and Design and Technology curriculum areas. Technology students in Year 7 and 8 have been involved in designing websites for healthy eating and these have been published on the school's intranet.

## **Links**

*Northern Beaches Secondary College Many Campus school website*  
<http://www.manlyselective.nsw.edu.au/>

*Healthy Kids website*  
<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/>

*Healthy School Canteen Strategy information (NSW Health)*  
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity/adult/canteens/resources.html>