



Start a School Community Kitchen!

What is a Community Kitchen?

A Community Kitchen is a group of people who meet on a regular basis to plan, cook and share healthy, affordable meals. They can be run in any community venue or school that has a kitchen, and be held for anyone including students, families, staff and the wider community.

Because every school is different, there is no 'one way' or 'right way' to run a Community Kitchen. However, there are three key features that are essential:

- 1 They are held on a regular basis (usually weekly or fortnightly)
- 2 All participants are actively involved in planning, preparing and cooking food
- 3 All food prepared is shared among participants and/or members of their household (meals are not given away or sold)

These key features ensure participants learn essential food preparation and cooking skills and take pride and ownership over the prepared meal (rather than just being provided with the food).

Community Kitchens:

- are owned and driven by the community, for the community
- provide regular opportunities for groups of people to come together and socialise
- enable participants to develop essential food independence skills. For example, literacy and numeracy, meal planning, budgeting, and food preparation skills
- enable participants to develop other life skills. For example, communication, interpersonal, teamwork and leadership skills
- build confidence and self-esteem
- improve access to healthy food
- improve motivation to cook at home, and reduce reliance on takeaway and fast food



Use the Community Kitchen model to enhance existing school programs and initiatives

If your school does not have the time and resourcing available to run a stand-alone Community Kitchen, that is ok! Your school may have programs in place (cooking group, gardening group, breakfast program etc.) that could be modified to include some of the key features of the Community Kitchen model.

The Community Kitchen key features that can be adopted by existing or initiatives are:

1. Held on a regular basis (usually weekly or fortnightly)
2. All participants are actively involved in planning, preparing and cooking of the food.

Examples:



A school is running a breakfast program once a month for students and families, and staff are responsible for preparing and serving breakfast. Could this breakfast program be tweaked so that students and families are involved in the planning, preparation and serving of breakfast?



A school has an edible garden program which is used few times a term. Explore how the edible garden can be used by the school community to grow, harvest, prepare and cook food.



A school is interested in starting a Community Kitchen for their school community; however there is limited time and resourcing. Is it possible for the school to develop a partnership with another local organisation to run a Community Kitchen using the school's kitchen facilities?



A school is running a program for disengaged students. The school does not have a kitchen, but there is a multi-purpose room with tables. Could students come together on a regular basis to plan, prepare and share foods that do not require full cooking facilities?



A school is interested running a Community Kitchen for staff, but they do not have the time or resourcing to make it a regular occurrence. Could staff come together once a term to prepare, cook and share a meal together as a team building activity?

For more info and FREE templates and resources visit:

www.communitykitchens.org.au