

What is a Canteen Committee?

Not all school canteens are run by a committee. Some canteens are accountable to the Principal or the school council and some are run by a member, or a committee of members, of the school's parent body. However, the information provided may be used to guide you through the essential elements of managing a school canteen.

The Canteen Committee

A canteen committee is responsible for monitoring the operations of the canteen and implementing and reviewing the canteen policy. They may also be responsible for specific decisions as specified in the canteen policy, such as employing staff, authorising major purchases or authorising changes in the menu.

A canteen committee is a proven way to give the canteen enough autonomy to operate as a business while maintaining strong connections to the whole school community. Some advantages of having a canteen committee are:

- The workload of overseeing the canteen can be shared amongst a team.
- It is a forum where different views and ideas from the whole school community can be considered without disrupting the day-to-day management of the canteen.
- It separates the direction of the canteen from the management of the canteen, giving the school community more flexibility in how the canteen operates.

Setting up a Canteen Committee

A canteen committee is elected from the school community. Your school may have guidelines on setting up and running committees that you should use when setting up your canteen committee.

The first thing to do when setting up a canteen committee is to decide how many people you need and the skills they need to have. This depends on the particular circumstances of your school, but as a rule a canteen committee should include the following positions:

- Chairperson - responsible for running committee meetings.
- Treasurer - responsible for signing all canteen cheques and regularly preparing and checking canteen financial records.
- Secretary - responsible for issuing meeting agendas and taking minutes of meetings, and then displaying them in the canteen.

Ensure that each person is comfortable with the requirements of each role they may fill. Use the following fact pages from our website to plan the roles and responsibilities of the canteen committee and its members. You can amend the list of requirements to meet the needs of your school.

- Roles and responsibilities of the canteen committee
- President/chairperson's role and responsibilities
- Secretary's role and responsibilities
- Treasurer's role and responsibilities

When preparing the lists of responsibilities remember that the canteen committee will be made up of some volunteers, and that it is important to keep a volunteer's workload within reasonable limits.

Once you have planned the roles and responsibilities, you can distribute the lists to prospective volunteers so that they can review what is required of them before they volunteer. This helps to prevent unexpected resignations from the committee.

Who should be on the Canteen Committee?

The canteen committee should be representative of the whole school community. Members could include:

- School council representatives
- Parent body representatives
- The Principal
- The canteen manager/convenor/administrator/supervisor
- Canteen volunteers
- Students (or a link to the SRC such as the SRC coordinator)
- Parents
- School staff
- The school nurse

