Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces

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Introduction

Why create a healthier workplace?

With diet overtaking smoking as the leading cause of early death and ill health [1], workplaces are ideal settings for encouraging healthy eating as many workers consume at least half their daily meals and snacks during work hours.

Promoting healthy eating in the workplace can contribute to:

- better physical and mental health
- reducing the risk of chronic disease (studies have shown a four to 10 per cent reduction [2] in heart disease risk for every additional serve of fruit or vegetable consumed each day)
- obtaining adequate vitamins and minerals by eating a wide variety of foods each day and boosting immunity by eating the recommended daily amounts of vegetables

Benefits of a healthier workplace

For **employers**, the benefits of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace are wide-ranging and include:

- reduced absenteeism – successful health and wellbeing initiatives can reduce sick leave absenteeism by an average of 25.3 per cent [3]
- reduced turnover – organisations that do not support health and wellbeing are four times more likely to lose employees [4]
- becoming an 'employer of choice'
- increased workforce innovation and creativity.

For **employees**, the benefits of promoting health and wellbeing can include:

- improved health and wellbeing
- increased productivity
- improved morale
- reduced stress and anxiety.

1 Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) 2013, 'Global burden of disease (GBD)', viewed 10 June 2015, <www.healthdata.org/results/data-visualizations>.
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012, Causes of death, Australia, 2010, Cat. no. 3303.0, ABS, Canberra.
2 Dauchet L, Amouyel P, Hercberg S, Dallongeville J 2006, 'Fruit and vegetable consumption and risk of coronary heart disease: a meta-analysis of cohort studies', *Journal of Nutrition*, vol. 136, no. 10, pp. 2588–2593.
3 Workplace Health Association of Australia WHAA (2015) *Best-Practice Guidelines; Workplace Health in Australia*.
4 World Economic Forum in partnership with Right Management (2010), The Wellness Imperative: creating more effective organisations, World Economic Forum, Geneva.

The Healthy Choices framework

Good nutrition is important for a healthy lifestyle and contributes to health and wellbeing. Together with physical activity, healthy eating plays a key role in preventing disease, promoting wellbeing and productivity, maintaining a healthy weight and promoting better oral health.

One-third of the burden of disease can be prevented. An analysis of the combined effects of thirteen dietary risk factors (such as, high sodium and sweetened beverage intake and low fruit, vegetable and fibre intake) found that they make up 7% of preventable disease burden. Other risk factors that caused high disease burden were tobacco use (9%), high body mass (5.5%), alcohol use (5%), physical inactivity

(5%) and high blood pressure (5%). It is important to reinforce the need for greater access to healthy foods and drinks in our community.[5]

The Victorian Government is putting health at the centre of our everyday lives through a place-based systems approach to prevention and health promotion. This involves increasing access to healthy foods and drinks in the places where people spend their time.

Healthy Choices is a framework for improving availability and promotion of healthier foods and drinks in workplaces and community settings (Figure 1).

Using the Healthy Choices framework, workplaces can provide consistent health promoting messages so that the foods and drinks available align with the values of organisations that support good health.

Figure 1: The Healthy Choices framework

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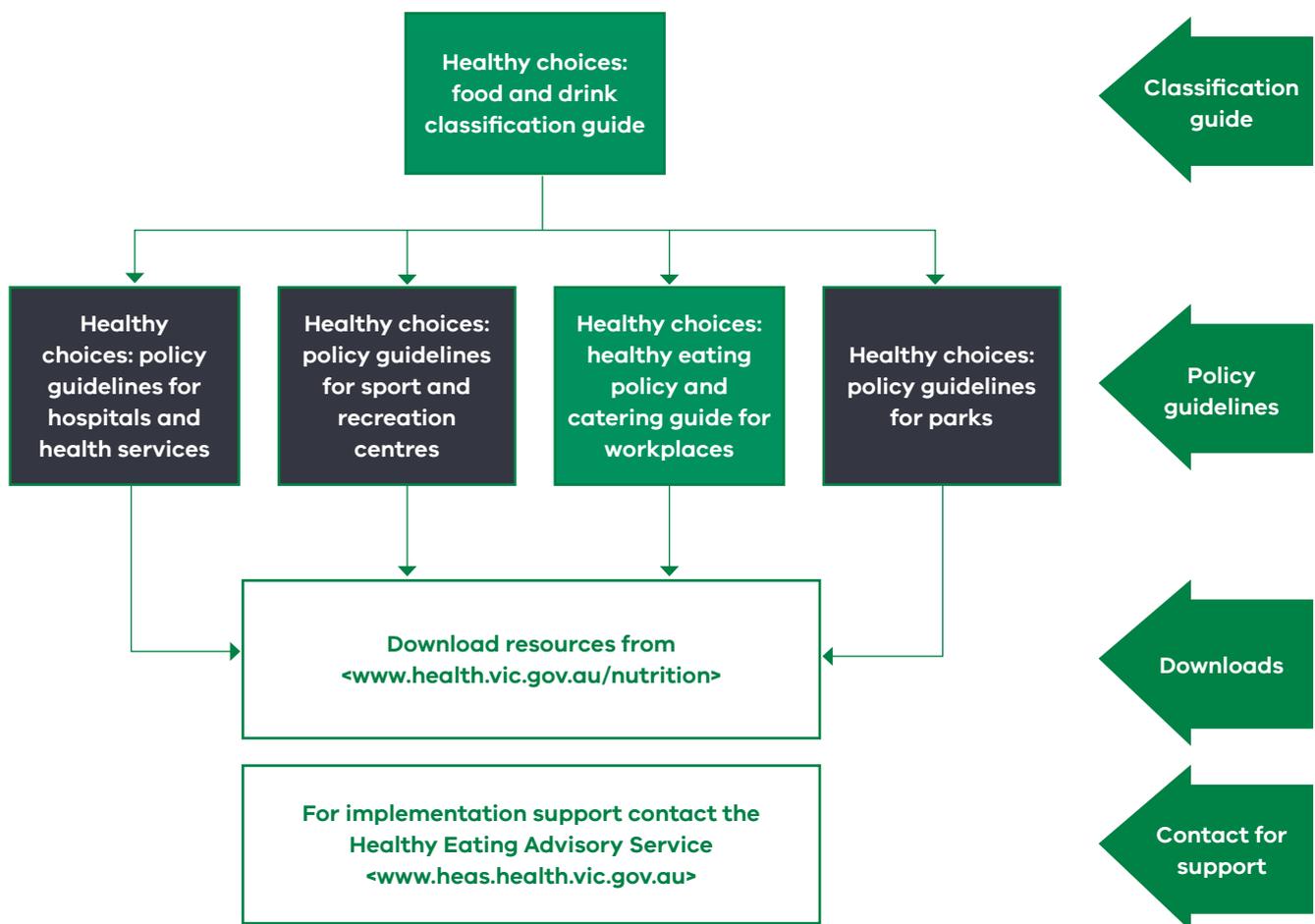
5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and case of illness and death in Australia 2011, available from <www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=60129555173>

Who is this resource for?

The *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces* is for organisations wanting to provide healthier food and drinks for employees and visitors.

Organisations are encouraged to use the *Healthy eating policy template* (Section 3) and *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4) as part of a broader approach to workplace health and wellbeing.

Workplaces registered with the Achievement Program can use this resource to work towards meeting the requirements of the healthy eating benchmarks.

The *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guidelines for workplaces* includes the following three parts:

1	**Implementation process**– five steps to assist with introducing the policy and catering guide in your workplace
2	**Healthy eating policy template** – a ready-to-use policy template that can be adapted to your workplace needs
3	**Healthy catering guide** – clear and practical guidance for choosing healthier options when purchasing food and drinks

Note: Throughout this document, the term 'catering' is used broadly to refer to any food and drinks provided or paid for by the workplace for employees and visitors.

The Achievement Program makes it easier for Victorians to be healthy. It achieves this through improving the health of places where adults and children spend their time – in workplaces, schools and early childhood services.

It allows workplaces, schools and early childhood services to broadly take a look at health and wellbeing within their organisation to determine what policies, cultural and environmental changes are needed to meet best practice benchmarks across a number of health priority areas including healthy eating.

Implementing the Healthy Choices policy supports the achievement of the healthy eating benchmarks as part of creating healthy workplaces, schools and early childhood services. For more information visit <www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au>

An example of marketing resources available for retail food outlets meeting the Healthy Choices guidelines

Choose well. Feel great.

Making healthy choices easier.

To help you make healthier choices, food and drinks have been classified according to their nutritional value.

Best choice

Choose **green** food and drinks as often as possible. They are fresh and good for you.

Choose carefully

Choose **amber** food and drinks sometimes. They are less healthy and there are better options.

Limit

To look after your health, choose **red** food and drinks rarely and in small amounts.

2

Five steps to implementation

Five steps for implementation

This section outlines a five step process (Figure 2, below) to help you implement a healthy eating policy in your workplace, using the *Healthy eating policy template* (Section 3) and *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4).

Each step includes a checklist of recommended tasks for all workplaces, and 'extra' tasks for workplaces that offer food and drinks from multiple locations (for example, a kitchen, staffroom, vending machine or catering for meetings).

For workplaces participating in the Achievement Program, these five steps align with the steps for progressing through the Achievement Program cycle.

The *Healthy eating policy* template and *Healthy catering guide* can be adapted to your organisation's workplace and staff requirements.

The traffic light classification system

Workplaces can use the *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4) to select healthy food and drinks for employees. The guide classifies food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED based on the traffic light system in the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*.

Reading the *Healthy catering guide* and becoming familiar with the principles of classifying food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED is recommended prior to starting.

Figure 2: Five steps for implementing a healthy eating policy in the workplace

Getting started | Assessing the current situation | Planning for change | Putting the plan into action | Monitoring and maintaining momentum

GREEN – best choice, to be available at all times and promoted and encouraged when food and drinks are provided by the workplace

Foods and drinks in the GREEN category are the healthiest choices. They are usually:

- good sources of important nutrients
- lower in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- lower in energy (kilojoules)
- higher in fibre.

GREEN foods and drinks are based on the five food groups in the *Australian guide to healthy eating*.

Examples of GREEN food and drinks are: sandwiches on multigrain and wholemeal breads; wholegrain cereals; fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables; reduced- or low-fat milk and yoghurt; vegetable frittatas; lean meat; roast chicken salads; fresh and frozen fish; eggs; and plain, unsalted nuts and seeds.

AMBER – choose carefully and avoid large serves

AMBER foods and drinks should be selected carefully and consumed in moderation. Although AMBER items may provide some valuable nutrients they can:

- contribute to excess energy (kilojoule) intake
- contain moderate amounts of saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt.

Look for healthier choices among food and drinks in this category. For instance, provide plain un-iced fruit buns instead of iced buns or provide plain scones (with the jam and margarine served separately).

Examples of AMBER food and drinks include full fat milk and yoghurt, some flavoured milk and dairy desserts, some processed meats such as ham and corned beef in small amounts, and some crumbed

chicken, fish or vegetable products. Order smaller serves where possible (such as mini muffins).

RED – avoid this category of food and drinks

Foods and drinks in the RED category are based on 'discretionary choices' in the *Australian dietary guidelines*. These items are not essential in a balanced diet and can contribute to excess energy intake, overweight and obesity and chronic disease if consumed frequently or in large amounts. In general RED choices are:

- high in energy (kilojoules)
- high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- lacking in important nutrients such as fibre.

RED food and drinks are not to be supplied through catering, and no more than 20 per cent of items in vending machines should be RED. Request reduced-fat, reduced-sugar and reduced-salt options.

Examples of RED food and drinks are confectionery, pastries, cakes, biscuits, all sugary drinks (such as soft drinks, cordials, energy drinks and sports drinks), deep fried foods, potato chips, pies, sausage rolls and processed meats such as salami.

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service supports organisations wanting to put Healthy Choices into practice. The Service provides information and advice, training and a comprehensive website with online learning and menu assessment tools, fact sheets, and recipes to help with providing healthier foods and drinks across the organisation. For more information visit <www.heas.health.vic.gov.au.>

Step 1. Getting started

Planning and preparation is the first important step when making healthy changes.

Use the examples in the table below as you work through the 'Getting started' step.

Recommended tasks	Date completed
Seek management endorsement and ongoing support for implementing a healthy eating policy. Strong management leadership and support will assist you to implement the policy and maintain any changes to current practice.	
Nominate a staff member, establish a new committee or use an existing committee to help plan and manage the healthy changes which will be occurring.	
Inform employees of the organisation's plans for making healthy changes and identify opportunities for staff to provide feedback on the policy and the catering guide. Involving staff in a meaningful way is important for achieving success and ongoing support for healthy changes in the workplace. Examples: Suggestion box, email address, focus groups, surveys, team meetings, staff emails, notices in staffrooms, newsletters	
Start an action plan for implementing your healthy eating policy (the action plan will be added to in the next four steps). Once your action plan is complete, review and update your drafted healthy eating policy to ensure that it includes all commitments your organisation has made regarding healthy eating. See Appendix 2 for a sample action plan.	
In your action plan, identify how you will accommodate Aboriginal perspectives and the needs of staff, volunteers, members and visitors of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Additionally, consider how you will accommodate older people and those with special needs.	
Extra	**Date completed**
If establishing or using an existing committee, aim to include representatives from all parts of your workplace, including management. This allows the views and ideas of different stakeholders, and will help you share responsibilities of policy implementation across the organisations. If a committee is not formed, establish a strategy for including different areas within the workplace in policy development and implementation.	
As the policy is being implemented, identify one or more workplace coordinators to promote the healthy changes being made and to encourage staff to make healthier food and drink choices.	

Step 2. Assessing the current situation

Before making any changes you will need to determine what is currently happening across the organisation and identify areas for improvement. The table below includes ideas to help you assess the current situation.

Recommended tasks	Date completed
Identify current catering or food related policies (for example, workplace health and wellbeing policies, breastfeeding support strategies, procurement policies), and note in your action plan if these require updating.	
Note key workplace personnel (such as staff responsible for organising catering or buying supplies) in your action plan. These people will be instrumental in supporting the new healthy eating policy and catering guide.	
In your action plan, list the situations where foods and drinks are available, and the types of foods and drinks that are provided in each situation. For example: • kitchens, staff rooms – fruit box, biscuits, coffee, tea, milk, water cooler • vending machines – soft drink, water, snacks • on-site retail outlets (for example, a café) – sandwiches, muffins • catering for meetings, functions and events – sandwiches, pastries • alcohol – at the end of year Christmas celebration and Board meetings • fundraising, gifts and prizes – chocolate boxes, wine bottles.	
Check whether drinkable water is freely available for employees	
Use the Recommended Options in the *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4) to categorise the foods and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED. Examples: Pastries ordered for morning tea are RED; the fruit box in the staffroom is GREEN.	
Record the categorised food and drinks in your action plan. This will assist you with prioritising action areas (under step 3).	
Determine whether there are facilities for employees to store and prepare healthy food and drinks brought into the workplace. Record this in your action plan Examples: Refrigerator, microwave, cutlery and crockery, food storage cupboards	
Extra	**Date completed**
Larger workplaces may wish to allocate different committee members to lead change in specific areas of the organisation.	
If your organisation has tender and lease documents and contracts with food and drink suppliers (for example, retailers, vending machine suppliers and caterers), review them and see whether these documents include requirements for providing and encouraging healthy foods and drinks.	
If your organisation would like an event to be outside the scope of this policy, for example Christmas functions , note these in your action plan and Healthy eating policy	
Identify if resources, information and opportunities are provided to increase knowledge and skills for healthy eating, for example. where food and drink is provided on-site.	
Identify how your organisation engages with the wider community to support healthy eating and healthy food initiatives, for example supporting local school or community vegetable gardens or social enterprise healthy catering schemes.	

Step 3. Planning for change

Once you have an idea of what the current situation is and the issues that need to be addressed, you can make a plan which outlines the steps that need to be taken to make healthy changes.

Recommended tasks	Date completed
Decide on priority locations where healthy changes are needed. Think about 'easy wins' that can be carried out early on as well as changes that require more time and planning. Examples: Setting up a chilled water tap or water cooler in your staff kitchen, or a dedicated space for staff to take meal breaks away from their desks.	
Where food and drinks are provided, determine the changes required to increase GREEN options and reduce RED options. Examples: Order fruit bread for morning tea instead of pastries; support fundraising opportunities not related to food and drinks, such as plant drives. Note: The *Healthy catering guide* provides a comprehensive list of healthier alternatives to common food and drinks.	
Identify supporters of healthy change. Examples: greater staff interest and awareness of health, meeting needs of staff wanting healthier options, embedding a healthy eating culture in your workplace.	
Identify barriers to change and ways to overcome these. Document these in your action plan Examples: Cost of catering, contracts with caterers, staff resistance to change, difficulty accessing GREEN products, lack of demand for healthy products, low priority for staff, concern over loss in profits, unsuitable facilities to prepare healthy food and drinks, extra time needed for staff to plan for and make changes.	
Document the timing of planned changes in your action plan. The timing of healthy changes which may depend on current stock levels and availability of healthier options from suppliers.	
If using external caterers, develop a list of preferred food and drink suppliers and local caterers who are able to provide healthier choices.	
Update (or replace) current catering or food policies (including relevant workplace health and wellbeing and procurement policies) in line with your new healthy eating policy.	
Extra	**Date completed**
Where food and drink is provided on-site by the organisation, develop point of sale promotion strategies to encourage purchase of healthier options.	
Encourage onsite cafeterias with contractual or lease arrangements to follow a healthy food service policy and provide healthy food and drinks consistent with the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*.	

Step 4. Putting the plan into action

Once you have a plan for making healthy changes, it's time to put the plan into action, starting with the priority areas identified.

Changes don't need to happen all at once. A staged approach is useful for making positive changes over time and to ensure new initiatives are well accepted and maintained.

Recommended tasks	Date completed
Refer to the action plan developed in steps 1–3. Starting with priority areas, carry out the tasks, actions and strategies you have identified. Ensure that management continues to support and communicate healthy changes across the organisation.	
Communicate healthy changes to staff. Examples: Email, newsletters, team meetings, posters in staffrooms/kitchens. Remember to also communicate why, how and when changes are happening.	
Identify additional information, resources and opportunities across the workplace to motivate and inform staff about healthy food and drink choices, in places such as display boards, intranet, reception, tea rooms and cafeterias. Examples: Posters, healthy eating leaflets, competitions between teams, sharing healthy recipes, education sessions, healthy lunch or cooking demonstrations. See *Useful resources and web sites* (Appendix 1) for links to promotional material and fact sheets.	
Ensure healthier food and drink choices are easy and appealing. Example: Several companies offer delivery of fresh fruit and vegetable boxes. These are a great alternative to biscuits in the staffroom.	
Ensure all available food storage facilities, preparation spaces and food preparation equipment is easily accessible and maintained to high food safety standards. For more information about food safety refer to <www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/> Examples: A fridge, sandwich maker, toaster, microwave, cutlery and crockery can make it easier for staff to bring healthy lunches to work.	
Communicate healthy changes to caterers and suppliers, if applicable. Examples: Provide suppliers with a copy of your organisations healthy eating policy and *Healthy catering guide*.	
Organise a healthy morning tea or lunch for staff to promote healthy changes in the organisation	
Note new barriers or emerging issues and solutions in the action plan. Include operational issues that may need to be addressed to help increase healthier foods and drinks and phase out unhealthy options Example: Work with your existing caterer to see if they can offer healthier choices or change your caterer/supplier to one that is able to provide healthier options according to the *Healthy catering guide*.	
Extra	**Date completed**
Set up a catering panel or preferred caterer list of suppliers that are able to provide healthier food and drink options. If you already have a panel or preferred suppliers, provide them with a copy of the *Healthy catering guide* and advise them of your new healthy eating policy.	
If your workplace is preparing food for its employees, rather than ordering from caterers, refer to the Recommended Options tables in the *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4) or *Healthy Choices: food and drink classification guide*.	

Step 5. Monitoring and maintaining momentum

Once healthy changes have been made, it is important to monitor your progress by undertaking regular reviews. Continue to reflect on your progress, communicate with stakeholders and seek and incorporate feedback as required.

This will help you maintain motivation, and will also help you determine further actions and initiatives that may be required.

Recommended tasks	Date completed
Continue to monitor progress, identifying improvements or additional changes that may be required as you go.	
Regularly review your action plan while implementing changes, and then continue to review the plan every 12 months to ensure relevance.	
Seek ongoing feedback from staff about the changes that have already been made as well as any changes planned for the future. Caterers and suppliers may also have useful feedback.	
Highlight successful changes in newsletters, via social media or at team meetings.	
Provide ongoing opportunities for staff to increase their healthy eating knowledge and skills. Examples: Cooking classes or 'making a healthy lunch' classes (either provided by the workplace directly or as a staff reward).	
Encourage staff to actively participate in promoting healthier choices	
Celebrate success! Example: Put on a healthy lunch for all staff to enjoy.	
Extra considerations	**Date completed**
Offer rewards or incentives for staff participation. Acknowledge caterers that have made an extra effort to provide healthier options. Examples: Workplace recognition, for example via the Achievement Program, water bottles, health books, gift vouchers.	
Invite new people to join the implementation committee. New members often bring creative ideas, skills and enthusiasm and may identify issues that have not previously been noted.	

3

Healthy eating
policy template

A Word version of this template that you can adapt to suit your organisation, is available from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service website at <http://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/organisational-policy-and-supplier-contracts/organisational-policy-template>. This policy is adapted from WorkSafe Victoria's WorkHealth *Healthy eating policy* (2010).

Healthy eating policy for [insert organisation's name]

Purpose

[Insert organisation's name] recognises and values the importance of healthy eating in promoting people's health and wellbeing. **[Insert organisation's name]** is committed to creating a health promoting environment which supports employees and visitors to make healthy food and drink choices.

Aim

This policy aims to support and encourage healthy eating in the workplace. Through this policy **[insert organisation's name]** will ensure healthy food and drinks are available at meetings, functions and events and through onsite retail outlets, vending machines and organisational fundraising.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to support:

- employees and visitors to make healthy food and drink choices by:
  - creating a healthy eating culture and environment which supports healthy food and drink choices
  - increasing availability and promotion of healthier foods and drinks
  - decreasing availability and promotion of unhealthy foods and drinks
  - increasing employee knowledge and skills of employees regarding healthy eating
- **[insert organisation's name]** to meet the healthy eating benchmarks of the Achievement Program (applicable to organisations participating in the Achievement Program).

Where does this policy apply?

This policy applies in all areas where foods and drinks are sold or provided to employees and visitors.

This includes **[include the following as relevant to your organisation]**:

- food and drink retail outlets such as restaurants cafeterias, cafes, canteens, kiosks (including mobile food kiosks) and coffee carts
- other retail outlets that mainly sell foods and drinks (such as convenience stores)
- vending machines
- catering provided for meetings, functions and events (such as workshops, conferences, community events, launches, celebrations and ceremonies) and client or community education or training programs
- catering provided by external user groups
- fundraising activities
- rewards, incentives, gifts, prizes and giveaways
- advertising, promotion and sponsorship.

The policy does not apply to food and drinks brought from home by employees (for example, birthdays, morning teas or personal fundraising). However, employees are encouraged to consider providing healthy options at all times and to avoid promoting unhealthy fundraising activities (such as chocolate or confectionery drives) in public places, such as kitchens.

Procedure

Table 1 outlines the requirements that [insert organisation's name'] will undertake to support and encourage health eating.

[Note: insert requirements your organisation has identified via the implementation steps and action plan)

Table 1: Requirements for supporting healthy eating at [insert organisation's name']

Food and drink choices	
Area (include as required)	Requirements
Catering (meetings, functions, events)	• Majority GREEN choices • No RED choices
Advertising and promotion	• GREEN choices are promoted • AMBER choices are not promoted at the expense of GREEN choices • RED choices not promoted • The organisation's logo is not used alongside RED choices • RED choices are not included in meal or point of sale promotions • RED choices are provided in the smallest size available

Culture and the physical environment	
Area (include as required)	Requirements
Fundraising, prizes, giveaways	• Fundraising activities are consistent with *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces* • No RED choices are supplied for children's awards, prizes and giveaways • Fundraising activities promoting unhealthy foods and drinks are discouraged and healthier options or fundraising opportunities not related to foods and drinks are encouraged.
Sponsorship	• Sponsorship activities are consistent with *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces*
Infrastructure to support healthy foods and drinks	• The physical environment supports healthy food and drink choices
Supporting breastfeeding	• Strategies are in place to support and encourage breastfeeding
Contracts, leases and tenders	• Healthy Choices is incorporated into tenders, contracts and leases that relate to supply of foods and drinks
Information and education	• Information and educational opportunities are provided to employees
Communication and community engagement	Involvement with community healthy eating initiatives (such as the Achievement Program) encouraged

Responsibilities

[insert relevant committee or position such as human resources (HR) manager or occupational health and safety (OHS) committee] is responsible for **[insert organisation's name]**'s Healthy eating policy.

All employees and contractors (for example, food and drink service providers) have a shared responsibility to support the policy, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for	Employees are responsible for:
• Ensure employees and visitors are aware of this policy and have access to it • Creating an organisational culture that supports healthy eating • Supporting implementation and review of this policy • Seeking feedback from employees • Providing opportunities for employees to develop healthy eating knowledge and skills	• Being aware of the Healthy eating policy • Observing the policy procedures • Maintaining an organisational culture that supports healthy eating
	Employees involved in food and drink provision are responsible for:
	• Understanding the *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces* • Providing food and drink suppliers with a copy of the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide* and the *Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces* • Ensuring food and drinks provided comply *Healthy Choices guidelines*

Guiding principles

• This policy has been developed in line with the following government guidelines:
  – *Australian dietary guidelines and Australian guide to healthy eating*
  – *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*
  – *Healthy choices: policy guidelines for hospitals and health services*
  – *Healthy food charter*

Related policies

• Organisational health and wellbeing policy
• Food safety policy
• Procurement policies

Communication

Employees are encouraged to actively contribute to all stages of development and review of this policy.

The policy will be easily accessible to all employees and employees will be notified of all changes made to the policy.

Caterers and suppliers will be notified of any changes to the policy.

The policy will be actively advertised and promoted in shared spaces in the organisation (staffrooms, kitchens).

Staff will have opportunities to provide input at all stages of policy development and review.

The policy will be easily accessible to staff and volunteers and will be made available in shared spaces (for example, staffrooms and kitchens) and via newsletters and email communication.

Key stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and food and drink suppliers will be notified of the introduction of the policy and any changes made.

Review and monitoring

This policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and every 12 months thereafter.

[Insert relevant committee or position such as HR or OHS committee] is responsible for leading the policy review.

The policy review process includes the following stages:

- assessing implementation to date and determining if objectives have been met
- identifying changes required to meet the policy objectives
- providing opportunities for employees to offer feedback
- seeking management support and endorsement for the updated policy
- distributing the updated policy to key stakeholders, including employees and food and drink suppliers and contractors.

Policy endorsement statement

[insert organisation's name] supports the implementation of the Healthy eating policy as an investment in the wellbeing of our employees.

Senior management will continue to support and champion healthy eating throughout the organisation in an ongoing capacity.

This *Healthy eating policy* has been endorsed by:	Name: Signature: Position: Date:
This *Healthy eating policy* has been reviewed in accordance with the above process:	Name: Signature: Position: Date:
Date of next review:	

4

Healthy catering guide

Using the *Healthy catering guide*

The *Healthy catering guide* provides clear and practical guidance to help you choose healthier food and drinks for employees and visitors. It is based on the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*, which categorises food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED according to nutritional value.

The guide includes healthy catering suggestions for breakfast, morning tea and afternoon tea (Table 1) and main meals (Table 2). In both tables, examples in the *Recommended* column are healthier GREEN or AMBER options which you can order for workplace catering. The options in the *Not recommended* column are in the RED category and should not be provided.

We recommend providing your caterer with a copy of the Catering Guide so they know what sort of food you will be ordering. They might want to make it easier for you by identifying the healthier options on their menus. If so, suggest they use the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide* <www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition/> to classify their menu items.

Note: If the food and drinks are being ordered on an ongoing or regular basis, such as biscuits in a staffroom, the Recommend options tables can also be used to ensure that healthier options are chosen.

Will alcohol be served?

Organisations that are licensed to provide alcohol may do so in accordance with organisational policies and the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*. Alcoholic drinks should not be provided in excessive quantities. If alcohol is provided, low-alcohol and non-alcoholic options, including free water, should be available and food should also be served.

For further information on the responsible service of alcohol, refer to the Victorian Commission of Gaming and Liquor Regulation website at <www.vcglr.vic.gov.au>.

The traffic light classification system

Workplaces can use the *Healthy catering guide* (Section 4) to select healthy food and drinks for employees. The guide classifies food and drinks as GREEN, AMBER or RED based on the traffic light system in the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*.

GREEN **– best choice, to be available at all times and promoted and encouraged when food and drinks are provided by the workplace**

Foods and drinks in the GREEN category are the healthiest choices. They are usually:

- good sources of important nutrients
- lower in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- lower in energy (kilojoules)
- higher in fibre.

GREEN foods and drinks are based on the five food groups in the *Australian guide to healthy eating*.

Examples of GREEN food and drinks are: sandwiches on multigrain and wholemeal breads; wholegrain cereals; fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables; reduced or low-fat milk and yoghurt; vegetable frittatas; lean meat; roast chicken salads; fresh and frozen fish; eggs; and plain, unsalted nuts and seeds.

AMBER **– choose carefully and avoid large serves**

AMBER foods and drinks should be selected carefully and consumed in moderation. Although AMBER items may provide some valuable nutrients they can:

- contribute to excess energy (kilojoule) intake
- contain moderate amounts of saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt.

Look for healthier choices among food and drinks in this category. For instance, provide plain un-iced fruit buns instead of iced buns or provide plain scones (with the jam and margarine served separately).

Examples of AMBER food and drinks include full fat milk and yoghurt, some flavoured milk and dairy desserts, some processed meats such as ham and corned beef in small amounts, and some crumbed

chicken, fish or vegetable products. Order smaller serves where possible (such as mini muffins).

RED – avoid this category of food and drinks

Foods and drinks in the RED category are based on 'discretionary choices' in the *Australian dietary guidelines*. These items are not essential in a balanced diet and can contribute to excess energy intake, overweight and obesity and chronic disease if consumed frequently or in large amounts. In general RED choices are:

- high in energy (kilojoules)
- high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- lacking in important nutrients such as fibre.

RED food and drinks are not to be supplied through catering, and no more than 20 per cent of items in vending machines should be RED. Request reduced-fat, reduced-sugar and reduced-salt options.

Examples of RED food and drinks are confectionery, pastries, cakes, biscuits, all sugary drinks (such as soft drinks, cordials, energy drinks and sports drinks), deep fried foods, potato chips, pies, sausage rolls and processed meats such as salami.

Recommended options for healthy catering ideas

Use Tables 1 and 2 to help you provide healthy catering for workplace meetings and events. Remember, water should always be provided as the main drink.

Note: classification of food and drinks in the following tables is of a general nature only. To classify a specific product (for example, a certain brand of meat pie), use the criteria in the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide* (available from <www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition>).

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service supports organisations wanting to put Healthy Choices into practice. For more information visit <www.heas.health.vic.gov.au>.

How much to order?

Large portions can contribute to excess energy and weight gain, even when the food and drinks provided are healthy. Determining appropriate quantities for catering can be difficult because many food and drinks are available in a variety of sizes - a slice of bread can range from a standard sandwich slice to an extra thick 'café style' fruit toast.

As a general guide, aim to provide the following for each person:

- one sandwich or wrap
- one cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables, or a half cup of cooked vegetables
- one medium piece of fruit (such as apple, banana, pear), two small pieces (apricot, plum, kiwifruit) or a cup of diced or canned fruit
- 40 g cheese (two slices)

Table 1: Healthy catering ideas for breakfast, morning tea and afternoon tea

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Drinks	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: • chilled plain water • sparkling, soda or mineral water • plain and decaffeinated coffee • plain and herbal teas • reduced-fat or skim milk • artificial sweetener for hot beverages	Sugar sweetened soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea drinks, flavoured mineral water, sports waters, cordials, energy drinks and sports drinks Large serves of fruit juice per person (greater than 250ml)
Fruit, dried fruit and nuts	• Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit • Canned fruit in natural juice • Stewed fruit without added sugar • Small portions (30g) of dried fruit and/or plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts	• Dried fruit-based confectionery (coated with sugar, chocolate, carob or yoghurt) • Banana chips • Coated (honey, chocolate or savoury coating) and/or fried nuts
Breads and crackers	Offer high-fibre wholemeal or wholegrain breads. Top with a variety of garnishes including reduced-fat cheeses or vegetables • multigrain, wholemeal, high-fibre white, rye, bagels, rolls, pita, baguette, Turkish bread, Lebanese bread, ciabatta • raisin or fruit bread • plain or fruit-based English muffins • savoury topped breads that are wholemeal or wholegrain with vegetable toppings and reduced-fat cheeses • plain, unflavoured crispbreads and crackers, lavash and rice crackers. Choose wholemeal or wholegrain options that are higher in fibre, pita and lebanese breads or water crackers	• Large serves of savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with cheese and processed high-fat meats such as bacon or salami • Flavoured varieties of crackers high in fat and/or salt
Spreads and condiments	Serve spreads and condiments separately and ensure you can see the bread through the spread • poly- or mono-unsaturated margarine • reduced-fat cream cheese • fruit jams without added sugar • avocado • ricotta or cottage cheese • nut butters with no added sugar, salt or fat	• Cream, butter or dairy-blend spreads • high-fat, cream- or oil-based dips • Jam, fruit pastes or coulis with added sugar

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Loaves, buns, scones, muffins, cakes, slices, pastries	Plain, un-coated, un-iced varieties that are higher in fibre (wholemeal or wholegrain) and lower in fat and sugar, for example: • fruit or vegetable based mini muffins (up to 60g) • plain or fruit-based pikelets • plain, fruit or vegetable-based (pumpkin) scones • banana or date loaf • plain hot cross buns • plain cakes and scrolls that contain wholemeal flour, fruit, vegetables or nuts in a small to medium serve size (a small finger or slice of cake 50–60 g per person)	• Options that are in larger serve sizes, higher in fat and sugar and lower in fibre, including those that are iced, coated or filled (with chocolate, confectionery or cream) • Danishes, doughnuts, croissants, tarts, cakes, slices, scrolls, sweet pastries, puddings, Soufflés, some scones, buns, loaves and muffins
Sweet biscuits	Plain or wholemeal sweet biscuits without icing or coating Offer small to medium serves (30 g or two/three small biscuits per person) Try reduced-fat and/or reduced-sugar varieties with wholemeal flour, fruit, vegetables and/or nuts	• Fancy sweet biscuits such as cream-filled, chocolate-coated, choc-chip or iced • Jumbo cookies and biscuits
Muesli or fruit-filled bars	Un-iced, un-coated cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars, of a small to medium serve size (30–40g)	Yoghurt- or chocolate-coated cereal or muesli bars or those containing confectionery such as chocolate chips; large serve sizes of cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars greater than 40 g
Toppings, dips, antipasto	Low-fat, low- or reduced-salt varieties. Examples include: • tomato, basil and cheese • cherry tomato, onion and avocado • low-fat vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, capsicum, bean or corn • reduced-fat versions of dips including tzatziki or hummus • vegetable-based dip varieties including beetroot, capsicum or eggplant, served with vegetables sticks, such as carrot and cucumber • chargrilled vegetables, such as zucchini, eggplant and capsicum	Oil, cream and or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Cheese and cheese platters	Small serves of cheese such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses, reduced-fat where possible, with a variety of accompaniments such as: • different bread varieties – wholemeal, salt-reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavash or water crackers • fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit • fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips • roasted or grilled vegetables (drain oil) • plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts	Large portions or blocks of cheese, double/triple cream soft cheeses such as brie and camembert Chocolate almond bread, high-fat, and high-salt crackers Salted, coated and/or fried nuts
Yoghurt	Reduced fat yoghurt (plain or flavoured)	
Breakfast cereals	• Cereals that are lower in added sugar, higher in fibre and without added confectionery (such as wholegrain cereals, wholewheat biscuits and flakes) • Untoasted muesli • Porridge/oats	

Table 2: Healthy catering ideas for main meals

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Drinks	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: • chilled plain and sparkling water • plain and decaffeinated coffee • plain and herbal teas • reduced-fat or skim milk for tea and coffee • artificial sweetener for hot beverages • 99–100 per cent fruit juice with maximum recommended serve size of 250 mL per person. Recommend serving in small cups	Sugar sweetened soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea drinks, flavoured mineral water, sports waters, cordials, energy drinks and sports drinks Large serves of fruit juice per person (greater than 250 mL)
Sandwiches	Offer a variety of breads, sandwich types and fillings; try finger or pinwheel sandwiches, open-faced, bread rolls, pita pockets or lavash wraps Use a wide variety of breads and rolls including: • multigrain, wholemeal or wholegrain, rye • high-fibre white • lavash and other flat breads • bagels or plain Turkish bread • small baguettes	Large portions of salty, high-fat savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with regular fat cheese and fatty, salty, processed meats such as bacon or salami Large portions of breads such as long hot dog rolls, ciabatta and focaccia
Sandwich spreads	Use spreads or condiments sparingly and try reduced-salt, reduced-fat varieties including poly- or mono-unsaturated margarine, avocado, cottage cheese, ricotta, reduced-fat cream cheese, hummus or tzatziki. Use mustards, relishes and chutneys in moderation	Butter, dairy blend spreads, mayonnaise; oil-, cream- and or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades, pesto
Sandwich fillings	Lean cuts of meats, meat alternatives or reduced-fat cheeses: • roast beef • roast chicken with no skin • lean turkey, chicken breast or ham • tinned fish (canned in spring water) • eggs • ricotta or cottage cheese, reduced-fat, hard or soft cheeses Use plenty of raw salad or vegetables Roasted or grilled vegetables drained of oil	High-fat, salty luncheon meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or Mortadella Do not add salt to sandwiches or filling ingredients

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Sushi and rice paper rolls	Try options that contain lean, un-coated and un-crumbed meats, tofu, egg or seafood and use a variety of vegetable fillings Use low-fat, reduced-salt ingredients in dipping sauces such as reduced-salt soy sauce or reduced-salt fish sauce with fresh herbs, garlic, onion or shallots	Sushi or rice paper rolls containing deep-fried, coated or battered ingredients Cream- or oil-based sauces (regular mayonnaise)
Salads	Offer a variety of salads, such as garden, bean, pasta, rice or noodle, potato, tabouleh, couscous, coleslaw, roasted vegetables or egg salad Use balsamic vinegar/lemon juice dressings, or low-fat mayonnaise, oil or yoghurt-based dressings. Offer dressing on the side If salads include meat or poultry, use lean varieties (with visible fat trimmed and skin removed) without crumbs or coating, that have been grilled, roasted or cooked in minimal amounts of poly- or mono-unsaturated oil When using tinned fish, use options that are canned in springwater Choose reduced-fat varieties of cheese, such as ricotta or cottage cheese If including nuts, choose unsalted, unroasted or dry-roasted options	Salads containing deep-fried ingredients (croutons, meat or seafood), fatty meats or coated meat and poultry Avoid fatty, salty cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or chorizo
Salad dressings	It is preferable to leave salads undressed or serve dressings separately Low-oil or no-oil dressings such as lemon, orange or lime juice, natural yoghurt, balsamic or wine vinegar with herbs or pepper Reduced-fat, low-oil, no-oil or low-joule commercial dressings and small amounts of low fat mayonnaise If preparing dressings use small amounts of poly- or mono-unsaturated oils, for example, canola, sunflower, sesame, olive or peanut oils	Do not add salt to salads or dressings Avoid excess dressing Cream- or mayonnaise-based dressings such as Caesar or sour cream

Item	Recommended food and drinks (GREEN and AMBER options)	Not recommended (RED options)
Finger foods, antipasto, dips	Vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, bean, or capsicum Reduced-fat yoghurt-based dips such as beetroot, eggplant, capsicum, avocado, tzatziki or hummus Roasted or grilled vegetables served drained of oil Olives served drained of oil Lean cold meat such as roast beef or skinless baked chicken Hot options such as lean meat and vegetable kebabs, mini frittatas or bruschetta Fresh cut fruit and/or vegetables sticks A variety of different breads, rice crackers, water crackers or reduced-fat/reduced-salt crispbreads or pita breads – wholemeal varieties where possible Vegetable-based frittatas	Deep-fried items including savoury pastries such as dim sims, spring rolls, samosas; coated or crumbed meat or vegetable products; and potato chips, wedges, gems, scallops or hash browns Hot or cold savoury pastries such as pies, sausage rolls, party pies, croissants or quiches High-fat, salty cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or Mortadella Oil-, cream-, and/or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades and pesto
Fruit and vegetable platters	Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables. Try fresh fruit kebabs with low-fat or reduced-fat dipping sauces such as: • fruit purees • reduced fat vanilla yoghurt • whipped ricotta	Whipped cream or chocolate sauce
Cheese and cheese platters	Small serves (40g per person) of cheese, (low- or reduced-fat where possible, such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses) with a variety of accompaniments such as: • different bread varieties, wholemeal, salt-reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavash, rice crackers or water crackers • fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit • fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips • roasted or grilled vegetables (served drained of oil) • plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts	Large portions or blocks of cheese, double/trip cream soft cheeses such as brie and camembert Chocolate almond bread, high-fat and high-salt crackers Salted, coated and/or fried nuts

Sample menus

The following sample menus include options from the 'recommended food and drinks' column in the previous tables. Remember to always provide water as the main drink at your workplace meetings, functions and events.

A bowl of whole fruit is a handy catering option for meetings as whole fruit is quicker to prepare, often costs less and will last longer than cut fruit.

Speak to your caterer regarding ordering for dietary requirements. For example, they should be able to identify which of their menu items are vegetarian, gluten free and /or wheat free.

Morning tea	Lunch
Jugs of water	Jugs of water
Low- or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks)	Low- or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks)
Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee	Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee
Vegetable-based frittata	Wholemeal sandwiches, wraps and wholegrain mini rolls (1 sandwich, wrap or roll per person) with assorted fillings such as reduced-fat cheese, lean meats or alternatives such as eggs or falafel and including plenty of salad. For example:
Seasonal fresh fruit	• roast beef, fruit chutney, red onion, tomato and lettuce
	• shaved lean ham, reduced-fat cream cheese, carrot, tomato and lettuce
	• roasted capsicum, hummus, sprouts and baby spinach
	Fruit and cheese platter. A suitable serve of cheese is 40 g per person

Lunch	Afternoon tea
Jugs of water	Jugs of water
Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee	Low- or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks)
Low- or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks)	Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee
Sushi and rice paper rolls:	2 x low fat mixed berry and apple cinnamon mini muffins or 60g medium savoury muffin per person
• Order a variety of vegetable fillings	Bowl of whole fruit
• Order lean, un-coated and un-crumbed meat, egg, tofu or seafood options	
Fresh fruit kebabs with low fat vanilla yoghurt	

Appendix 1. Useful resources and websites

Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide

- Food and drink traffic light classification system
- Common food and drinks classification guide
- Available from <www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition>

Healthy food charter

- A guide to promoting healthy food and drinks and making healthy choices easier
- Available from <www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition>

Healthy Eating Advisory Service

- Fact sheets and recipes
- Available from <www.heas.health.vic.gov.au> or free call 1300 22 52 88
- Assistance with meeting the workplace healthy eating benchmarks of the Achievement Program Training about the Healthy Choices guidelines
- Online tools to help classify foods and drinks Healthy Vending Assessment tool

Achievement Program

- An initiative which encourages a whole-organisation approach to health promotion
- Visit <www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au>

Eat for Health

- Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating
- Posters, brochures and promotional material
- Available from <www.eatforhealth.gov.au>

Better Health Channel

- Fact sheets and recipes
- Available from <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>

'Healthy fundraising' (Cancer Council)

- Ideas to promote health while still making a profit
- Available from <www.cancercouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/09271_CAN3042_HealthyFundraising_FINAL.pdf-low-res-for-web.pdf>

Live Lighter

- Fact sheets, recipes, meal and activity planner and BMI calculator
- Available from <www.livelighter.com.au>

Special diets

The *Healthy catering guide* is not designed for treatment of specific diseases or medical conditions requiring dietary intervention. If you are asked to cater for special dietary requirements, refer to the information on the following websites:

- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy <www.allergy.org.au>
- Heart Foundation <www.heartfoundation.org.au>
- Better Health Channel
- <www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au>
- Diabetes Australia Victoria
- <www.diabetesvic.org.au>
- Baker IDI <www.bakeridi.edu.au>
- Coeliac Australia <www.coeliac.org.au>
- Meniere's Australia Resource and Information Centre <www.menieres.org.au>

Appendix 2: Sample action plan

Actions	When *Date, week, month*	Who *Person/committee responsible*	How *Resources (budget, equipment, location)*	Done	Evaluation *Measures to monitor progress*
Get started					
Seek management endorsement	Jan–Feb	Senior Manager	Monthly manager meeting	☐	Draft policy endorsed
Seek staff feedback	Jan–Mar	Health and wellbeing team	All staff email, suggestion box and notices in staff rooms	☐	Employees consulted
				☐	
Assess the current situation					
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	
Develop actions and alternatives					
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	
Put the plan into action					
				☐	
				☐	
Maintain momentum					
				☐	
				☐	
				☐	