1. Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

To help decide whether a breakfast program is needed in your school, it is worthwhile gathering information regarding:

• why students do not have breakfast
• whether a breakfast program is the best intervention to support students
• whether a breakfast program is viable in the school.

How do you collect such information?
Collect information from school students, parents/caregivers, teachers, SSOs and others in the school community. You will need to decide which methods will work most effectively for your school based on your knowledge of your community.

Below are some examples of tools (sheets 1 to 5) to use to determine the level of need in your school. This information will help you better understand the problems faced by students and therefore make an informed decision about the best course of action for your school community.

In some cases a breakfast program may not be the best way to assist your students. Your findings will guide you in making a decision about what suits your school best. Some alternatives to starting a breakfast program might include:

• having a morning tea break earlier in the school day
• making fruit available to students to eat in the classroom during the morning
• opening the canteen earlier, perhaps before school
• conducting nutrition education units in classes
• undertaking awareness-raising activities in the school community on the importance of breakfast
• providing parents with tips on how to prepare a nutritious, value for money breakfast.

Important questions for planning to start a breakfast program

• Does the school have the commitment and capacity to build a breakfast program that meets the defined need?
• Can additional school/community support be generated for the program?
• Where can necessary resources/funding be obtained?
• Who will be the staff member responsible for the program?
• Will volunteers be required to manage the program?
• How will volunteers be recruited?
• What procedures are in place to select suitable volunteers?
• What procedures are in place to deal with unsuitable volunteers?
• Who else is to be involved?
• What will their role be?
• How will you communicate with the school community about the program and encourage children to have breakfast before they come to school?
• Is there an appropriate venue for the breakfast program?
• What healthy foods will be served at breakfast program?

Extract from the Red Cross school breakfast program start-up kit.
Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 1: Student breakfast questions (Grades 4 and above)

Please answer these questions so we can learn about breakfast eating habits in our school. We really need your help so that we can learn together. Thank you for taking the time.

Class/Home group teacher: ___________________________ Year/Level: __________

1. Are you a boy or a girl? (Please tick your answer.)
   - Girl
   - Boy

2. How many days per week do you eat breakfast? (Please tick your answer.)
   - Not at all
   - 1-2 days
   - 3-4 days
   - 5-6 days
   - Every day

3. If you don't eat breakfast every day, why not? (You may tick more than one.)
   - Sleep in
   - Not hungry
   - Too busy
   - Visiting friends
   - Left home too early
   - No food
   - Disliked available foods
   - Can’t be bothered
   - Other:

4. Where do you normally eat breakfast on weekdays? (Please tick box for most common place.)
   - Home
   - School
   - Restaurant
   - Take-away
   - Car/bus
   - Friends
   - Relatives’ home
   - Other:

5. What do you usually eat for breakfast on weekdays?
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

6. Do you think it is important to eat breakfast every day? (Please tick your choice.)
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

7. Which of the following are healthy breakfast foods? (Please tick all of your choices.)
   - Cereal
   - Juice
   - Toast
   - Milk
   - Yoghurt
   - Soft drink
   - Chips (Crisps)
   - Hot chips
   - Meat pie
   - Doughnuts
   - Boiled eggs
   - Fried eggs
   - Scrambled eggs

8. If you could get breakfast at school, would you eat it? (Please tick your answer.)
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - Why? ____________________________________________

Thank you!

www.redcross.org.au

CRISIS CARE COMMITMENT
Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 2:

Breakfast program
Individual student survey (Grades K–2)
(Teacher guided)

Do you eat breakfast?

Every day            Some days            Not very often

Draw a picture of what you eat for breakfast


www.redcross.org.au  CRISIS CARE COMMITMENT
Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 3: You and breakfast (Grades 3 and over)

Class: __________

Do you eat breakfast

☐ every school day (5)?
☐ every day (7)?
☐ weekends?
☐ never?
☐ sometimes? How often? _____

When you eat breakfast, what do you eat?

If you do not have breakfast, why don’t you?

1. Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 4 Parent breakfast assessment

We are asking for your help in assessing the breakfast habits of school-aged children. Please answer these questions and ask your children to return the form to their teachers tomorrow.

Thank you, your time is appreciated.

1. How many children do you have in our school? ____________________________

2. What grades are they in? (each letter represents a different child)
   A ________ B ________ C ________ D ________ E ________

3. How many days per week do your children eat breakfast? (Please circle.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>How many days per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If your children ever skip breakfast on a school day, please tick why in the table below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Child A</th>
<th>Child B</th>
<th>Child C</th>
<th>Child D</th>
<th>Child E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overslept (no time)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not hungry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busy with morning activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialise instead of eat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus or lift comes too early</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No food for breakfast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to eat less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislikes foods available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

5. Where does each child normally eat breakfast?
   (please place corresponding letters for each child into appropriate line):
   Home ________  School ________  Restaurant__________  Take-Away__________  
   Car/Bus________  Friends__________  Relatives__________  Other__________

6. What do your children generally eat for breakfast on weekdays?
   _______________________________________________________________________

7. Do you believe that eating breakfast has a positive effect on a child’s performance and behaviour at school?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Unsure

8. What do you consider to be healthy breakfast options?
   _______________________________________________________________________

9. If our school offered breakfast (free or reduced price breakfasts would be available to all children), would you want your child to eat breakfast at school?
   ☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Sometimes/maybe
   Please give reasons: _______________________________________________________________________

www.redcross.org.au
Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 5: Breakfast assessment summary
Parent and student responses class summary form and instructions

The breakfast assessment summary form will help determine how many children are eating breakfast every day, why breakfast is skipped, where it is eaten and if the breakfast is adequate or inadequate.

1. Complete one column of the summary sheet for each student by filling in their responses from the ‘Student breakfast questions’ form.
2. For Question 1, use a tick to indicate how many times a week breakfast was eaten.
3. For Question 2, use a tick to indicate the reason(s) for not eating breakfast.
4. For Question 3, use a tick to indicate where the student usually eats breakfast.
5. For Question 4, put a tick in the appropriate box for items listed according to the food groups:
   a. Cereal, toast, other breads
   b. Fruit, vegetables or juice
   c. Milk, yoghurt or cheese
   d. Eggs, red/white meat, beans

For example, if a child or parent lists ‘Weetbix with milk’, place ticks in the ‘Cereal, toast, other breads’ boxes and also in the ‘Milk, yogurt or cheese’ boxes. Foods listed that do not fit into the food groups are to be recorded in the ‘Other’ box.

6. For Question 5, each student’s breakfast can be classified as adequate or inadequate. An adequate breakfast rating is when a child ate from at least two of the food groups not including the ‘Other’. Place an ’A’ in the box for adequate, or an ‘I’ in the box for inadequate.

For example, if students 1 and 2 recorded consuming the following foods for breakfast:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Student 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 banana, 1 piece of toast, 1 glass of milk</td>
<td>1 muesli bar, 1 glass of cordial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4 of the breakfast assessment class summary form would be filled out as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What eaten?</th>
<th>Student 1</th>
<th>Student 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cereal/breads</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit, vegetables, juice</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk, yoghurt or cheese</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs, red/white meat or beans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast rating</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determining whether your school needs a breakfast program

Sample sheet 5:

What's happening in our school?

School: ________________________ Date: ___/ ___ /___

_______ % of students do not eat breakfast every school day.
_______ % of students come to school having eaten an inadequate breakfast and are therefore probably not ready to learn.

The main reasons given for skipping breakfast are:
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Students mainly eat breakfast in the following places:
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Breakfasts mainly consist of:
1. __________________________________ 2. __________________________________
3. __________________________________ 4. __________________________________

_______ % of students do not know what constitutes a good breakfast.
_______ % of students would eat breakfast at school, if available.
_______ parents would support the provision of breakfast at school.
_______ parents would volunteer to provide breakfast at school.

Ways that our school might respond to this information could include:
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________

Action steps:
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________