

AT A GLANCE

Texas Public School Nutrition Policy for Elementary Schools

Schools are in a powerful position to influence children's lifelong health habits, including diet and exercise. To support this role and help combat the childhood obesity crisis, the Texas Department of Agriculture created new nutrition guidelines for public schools participating in the federally funded Child Nutrition Programs. This quick reference guide outlines the policies for Texas elementary schools, effective Aug. 1, 2004. For the purpose of this policy, elementary schools are defined as any campus containing a combination of grades early elementary to sixth.



FOOD FROM HOME

This policy does not restrict the types of food that parents provide for their own child's consumption at school. However, schools may adopt more restrictive rules as a local policy.

FOOD AT SCHOOL

ITEM	NUTRITION POLICY
Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value* (FMNVs)	The school may not provide FMNVs to students at any time during the school day.
Candy (Including candy bars and packaged candies not included as FMNVs.)	The school may not provide candy to students at any time during the school day.
Competitive Foods (Any food and beverages that are not provided by the school food service.)	The school may not allow competitive foods at any time during the school day.
Fried Potato Products (French fries, hash browns, etc.)	Servings cannot exceed 3 oz., may only be served once a week and may only be purchased one serving at a time.
Carbonated Beverages	The school may not provide access to carbonated beverages during the school day.

* See reverse for definitions.

EXEMPTIONS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

WHERE & WHEN	NUTRITION POLICY EXEMPTION
Classroom: Daily	Elementary classrooms may serve one nutritious snack per day in the morning or afternoon (not during lunchtime) under the teacher's guidance. The classroom snack may be provided by the school food service, the teacher, parents or other groups and should be at no cost to students. For nutritious snack ideas, see TDA's listing of "Suggestions for Nutritious Snacks," available on request and at www.squaremeals.org .
Classroom: Birthday Parties	Foods otherwise restricted by the policy are permitted at student birthday parties. It is recommended such parties be scheduled after the end of the class's lunch period so that these celebrations will not replace a nutritious lunch.
Classroom: TAKS Test Days	Schools and parents may provide one additional nutritious snack per day for students taking the TAKS tests. For healthy snack ideas, see TDA's listing of "Suggestions for Nutritious Snacks," available on request and at www.squaremeals.org .
Outside the Class: Field Trips, Athletic, UIL and Band Competitions	The nutrition policy does not apply to students who leave campus for campus-approved field trips or to travel to athletic, UIL, band or other competitions. The school day is considered to have ended for these students. School activities, athletic functions, etc. that occur after the normal school day are not covered by the policy.
Other	Certain exemptions are allowed for school nurses, students with special needs and up to three school wide events preapproved by campus officials. (NOTE: Federal regulations do not allow FMNVs to be sold or given away during meal periods where reimbursable meals are served/consumed, including during any exempted events.)

This information was compiled in October 2004. For the most current policy updates, go to www.squaremeals.org.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value*

SODA WATER

Includes any carbonated beverage, including those with added nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and protein.

WATER ICES

Includes any frozen, sweetened water such as popsicles and other "...sicles" and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juice.

CHEWING GUM

Includes any flavored products made from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing.

CERTAIN CANDIES

Includes any processed foods made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, including hard candy, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy and candy-coated popcorn.

*Some items have received exemptions from USDA. Go to www.squaremeals.org for that list.

(Federal regulations do not allow FMNVs to be sold or given away during meal periods where reimbursable meals are served and/or consumed, including during any exempted events.)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What exactly is a competitive food?

A competitive food is any food or beverage sold or made available to students that is not provided by the school cafeteria. This includes items sold in vending machines, in school stores or through school fundraisers conducted by parents, administrators or other groups and organizations. However, items such as pizza or sandwiches may be provided if they are supplemented with additional food provided by school food service to complete a meal. Be sure to check with your school for any local policies and practices.

How is a "school day" defined?

The school day is defined as beginning with the start of the first breakfast period until the end of the last instruction period of the day (last bell). School activities, athletic functions, etc. that occur after the normal school day are not covered by this policy. If a school operates the federally-funded After School Snack Program, the policy will be in effect until this concludes for the day.

Which school-level policy should K-12 schools follow?

K-12 schools may follow the policy requirements designated for middle school and junior high schools.

Does this policy prohibit school teachers from using competitive foods as an instructional tool in the classroom?

School teachers may use food for instructional purposes as long as the food items are not considered FMNVs or candy.

Do these nutrition standards apply to fundraising?

No food fundraising will be allowed on an elementary school campus during the school day; however, schools or school-approved organizations may take orders or sell vouchers during the school day for candy or other restricted items and deliver these items after the end of the school day. TDA has developed a list of ideas for non-food fundraising available at www.squaremeals.org.

For more FAQs, go to www.squaremeals.org. For answers to additional questions, e-mail TDA at squaremeals@agr.state.tx.us.



square meals

Nourishing children's bodies and minds.

A Program of the Texas Department of Agriculture's
Food and Nutrition Division

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