

Policy Extract

[Nutrition Standards for Food in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth](#)

To initiate the study process, the committee developed a set of guiding principles to support the creation of a healthful eating environment for children in U.S. schools and to guide the deliberations and development of standards.

Guiding principles:

The committee recognises that:

1. The present and future health and well-being of school-age children are profoundly affected by dietary intake and the maintenance of a healthy weight.
2. Schools contribute to current and lifelong health and dietary patterns and are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthful eating behaviours in partnership with parents, teachers, and the broader community.
3. Because all foods and beverages available on the school campus represent significant caloric intake, they should be designed to meet nutrition standards.
4. Food and beverages have health effects beyond those related to vitamins, minerals, and other known individual components.
5. Implementation of nutrition standards for foods and beverages offered in schools will likely require clear policies; technical and financial support; a monitoring, enforcement, and evaluation programme; and new food and beverage products.

The committee intends that:

6. The federally reimbursable school nutrition programmes will be the primary source of foods and beverages offered at school.
7. All foods and beverages offered on the school campus will contribute to an overall healthful eating environment.
8. Nutrition standards will be established for foods and beverages offered outside the federally reimbursable school nutrition programmes.
9. The recommended nutrition standards will be based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, with consideration given to other relevant science-based resources.
10. The nutrition standards will apply to foods and beverages offered to all school-age children (generally ages 4 through 18 years) with consideration given to the development differences between children in elementary, middle, and high schools.

Standards for Nutritive Food Components

Standard 1: Snacks, foods, and beverages meet the following criteria for dietary fat per portion as packaged:

- No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat
- Less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fats
- Zero trans fat

Standard 2: Snacks, foods, and beverages provide no more than 35 percent of calories from total sugars per portion as packaged.

Exceptions to the standard are:

- 100 percent fruits and fruit juices in all forms without added sugars;
- 100 percent vegetables and vegetable juices without added sugars; and
- Unflavoured nonfat and low-fat milk and yogurt. Flavoured nonfat and low-fat milk can contain no more than 22 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce portion, and flavoured nonfat and low-fat yogurt can contain no more than 30 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce serving.

Standard 3: Snack items are 200 calories or less per portion as packaged and a la carte entrée items do not exceed calorie limits on comparable National School Lunch Program (NSLP) items.

Standard 4: Snack items meet a sodium content limit of 200 mg or less per portion as packaged or 480 mg or less per entrée portion as served a la carte.

Standards for Nonnutritive Food Components

Standard 5: Beverages containing non-nutritive sweeteners are only allowed in high schools after the end of the school day. Because of the uncertainties and limitations in evidence, especially concerning the safety and benefits for weight control, the committee does not recommend a standard for non-nutritive sweeteners in foods.

Standard 6: Foods and beverages are caffeine-free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine-related substances.

Standard 7: Foods and beverages offered during the school day are limited to those in Tier 1.

Standard 8: Plain, potable water is available throughout the school day at no cost to students.

Standard 9: Sports drinks are not available in the school setting except when provided by the school for athletes participating in sport programmes involving vigorous activity of more than one hour's duration.

Standard 10: Foods and beverages are not used as rewards or discipline for academic performance or behaviour.

Standard 11: Minimise marketing of Tier 2 snacks, foods, and beverages in the high school setting by

- Locating Tier 2 food and beverage distribution in low student traffic areas; and
- Ensuring that the exteriors of vending machines do not depict commercial products or logos or suggest that consumption of vended items conveys a health or social benefit.

Standards for the After-School Setting

Standard 12: Tier 1 snack items are allowed after school for student activities for elementary and middle schools. Tier 1 and Tier 2 snacks are allowed after school for high school.

Standard 13: For on-campus fund-raising activities during the school day, Tier 1 foods and beverages are allowed for elementary middle, and high schools. Tier 2 foods and beverages

are allowed for high schools after school. For evening and community activities that include adults, Tier 1 and 2 foods and beverages are encouraged.

IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDED STANDARDS

Action 1: Appropriate policy-making bodies ensure that recommendations are fully adopted by providing

- Regulatory guidance to federal, state, and local authorities;
- Designated responsibility for overall coordination and oversight to federal, state, and local authorities; and
- Performance-based guidelines and technical and financial support to schools or school districts, as needed.

Action 2: Appropriate federal agencies engage with the food industry to

- Establish a user-friendly identification system for Tier 1 and 2 snacks, foods, and beverages that meet the standards per portion as packaged
- Provide specific guidance for whole-grain products and combination products that contain fruits, vegetables, and whole grains