

Smart Snacks in Schools Standards

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do the new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards do?

The new standards will allow schools to offer healthier snack foods for children. Students will still be able to buy snacks that meet common-sense standards for fat, saturated fat, sugar, and sodium, while promoting products that have whole grains, low fat dairy, fruits, vegetables or protein foods as their main ingredients. It is important to note that the USDA has no role in regulating foods brought from home. The standards do not apply to any foods brought to school in bagged lunches or for birthday parties held in the classroom.

2. What is the definition of the school day?

For the purpose of competitive food standards implementation, the USDA defines the school day as the period from the midnight the night before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

3. What is the definition of the school campus?

For the purpose of competitive foods standards implementation, the school campus is defined as all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

4. What is the definition of a school sponsored event?

An event that occurs outside of the enrolled single classroom and involves several members of the student body. Examples of school sponsored events include field days, spirit days, or other school celebrations.

5. Do the nutrition standards apply to classroom parties?

No, classroom parties – defined as a celebration that occurs within a given classroom and limited to only those students enrolled in that one classroom are not subject to the nutrition standards. Examples of classroom parties are holiday parties and birthday parties that occur in the classroom limited only to those enrolled students.

6. Can I bring treats for my child's birthday?

Yes, with permission from the teacher and the principal at your child's school. The District Wellness Policy requires that all food brought onto campus for classroom celebrations originates from commercial grocery or food service stores or other commercial kitchens certified to comply with Maricopa County Environmental Services regulations.

7. What is considered a fundraiser?

A fundraiser is an event that includes any activity during which currency, tokens, or tickets are exchanged for the sale or purchase of a product in support of the school or school-related activities.

8. Do the Smart Snacks in Schools Standards apply to all fundraisers?

All fundraisers held during the school day (the period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day) are required to meet the nutrition standards. The only exception would be selling food items that are clearly not intended to be eaten immediately (i.e. frozen cookie dough). The sale of food items that meet the Smart Snacks in Schools Standards are not limited in any way. The standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends and at off campus fundraising events.

9. What kind of snacks can be served during standardized testing?

If snacks are purchased by the PTO or provided by the school for students during standardized testing, the items served must meet the Smart Snacks in Schools Standards. Snacks brought from home are not subject to these standards. Refer to the Approved Food List for snacks that meet the standards.

10. Traditionally, our PTO provided elementary school students with ice cream or other frozen treats to celebrate Box Top competitions, previous years' test scores, or the end of the school year. Are we still allowed to do this?

Yes, as long as the item meets the Smart Snacks in School Standards. This would be considered a school sponsored event and the nutrition standards apply to foods sold or served to students in grades K-8.

11. How do the nutrition standards impact events like "Donuts with Dads" or "Muffins with Mom"?

If the event is held before or during school, the nutrition standards apply. Breakfast options that meeting the standards can be ordered from the Nutrition Services Department or connect to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Calculator to see if your items meet the nutrition standards.

12. Can we serve items such as sno-cones or popsicles at recess or our school "Field Day"?

Yes, if the item meets the Smart Snack Standards. You may serve 100% Fruit Juice Otter Pops (they MUST be the 100% juice kind). Low-fat ice cream treats and 100% juice popsicles that meet the nutrition standards may be purchased from the Nutrition Services Department or review the Approved Food List for other options.

13. Can we sell Jamba Juice?

Jamba Juice smoothies are permitted if they are the “All Fruit Smoothies” in an 8 oz portion for elementary students or a 12 oz portion for middle or junior high students.

14. What kind of food can I serve at a school carnival on the weekend?

If the carnival is held after school hours, the event is exempt from any nutrition standards. School-sponsored functions, such as carnivals must comply with Maricopa County Environmental Service regulations and district regulations. A county special events permit must be obtained to operate public functions where food is served. Alternatively, schools may contract the services of the Nutrition Services Department, an outside vendor or caterer that has obtained all required permits. Please refer to the Special Event Food Regulations.

15. Can I give treats to students for good behavior or academic achievement?

The Washington Elementary School District’s Wellness Policy encourages using non-food rewards to recognize students.

16. Our PTO wants to provide cookies to celebrate a reading goal, the anniversary of our school, or another type of celebration. What type of cookies are we allowed to serve?

Cookies or other grain based items must be “whole grain rich” – at least 51% of the grain in the item must be a whole grain and the item must also meet calorie, fat, saturated fat, sodium and sugar limits. Contact your cafeteria manager to place an order for fresh baked cookies that meet the nutrition standards, review the Approved Food List or connect to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Calculator to see if your item meets the nutrition standards.