

TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL NUTRITION POLICY AT A GLANCE

(A PROGRAM OF THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE)
EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2004-05 SCHOOL YEAR

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) Defined

Soda Water—Any carbonated beverage, including those with added nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and protein.

Water Ices—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—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.

“Competitive” Foods Defined

Includes all food and beverages that are not provided by school food service. This includes items sold in vending machines, in school stores or through school fundraisers conducted by parents or other groups and organizations. Outside food and beverages provided for events such as pizza parties, etc., are also considered competitive.

Exemptions

Certain exemptions are allowed for school nurses, students with special needs and up to **three pre-approved school wide events**. Those dates in RRISD are: Dec. 16, February 11 and May 25.

Field Trips—Campus-approved field trips are exempt.

Athletic, UIL, Band and Other

Competitions—Policy does not apply to students who leave campus 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.

Elementary Schools

FMNVs—Not allowed at any time during the school day

Candy—Not allowed at any time during the school day.

Competitive foods--Not allowed at any time during the school day.

French fries & fried potato products (except chips)—May not exceed 3 oz. servings, may only be served once a week, and may only be purchased one serving at a time. However, the elementary schools have never fried foods.

Carbonated beverages—Not allowed at any time during the school day.

Middle Schools

FMNVs—Not allowed until after the last lunch period.

Candy—Not allowed until after the last lunch period.

Competitive foods—Not allowed during meal periods.

French fries & fried potato products (except chips)—May not exceed 3 oz. servings, may not be served more than three times per week, and may only be purchased one serving at a time.

Carbonated beverages—Not allowed until after the last lunch period.

High Schools

FMNVs—Not allowed during meal periods in areas where reimbursable meals are served and consumed.

Candy—Allowed.

Competitive foods—Not allowed during meal periods in areas where reimbursable meals are served and consumed.

French fries & fried potato products (except chips)—May not exceed 3 oz. servings and may only be purchased one serving at a time.

Carbonated beverages—Sugared, carbonated beverages cannot be sold in containers larger than 12 oz. and are not allowed during meal periods in areas where reimbursable meals are served and consumed.

Other Frequently Asked Questions

Do these nutrition standards apply to fundraising? No food fundraising will be allowed on an elementary school campus during the school day. For middle schools and high schools, the nutrition standards will apply to food fundraising during the school day.

In middle schools, food sales are not allowed anywhere on campus during meal periods. In high schools, food fundraising is not allowed during meal periods in the cafeteria or dining areas. For all secondary schools, if food items are delivered during school hours, the items must meet the portion size restrictions outlined in the TDA Nutrition Policy. Orders for fundraising food items, such as cookie dough, can be placed during the school day but delivery may not occur until after school hours. Items sold or delivered after school are not required to meet the TDA rules.

Are snacks allowed? What about water vending machines?

Students in all grade levels may be provided one snack per day as long as it meets TDA portion size restrictions and nutritional guidelines and do not consist of FMNV. Water vending machines can be on all day anywhere on campus at all grade levels.

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Background:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture established the Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value list, which included soda, water ices, chewing gum, and certain candies.

In 2003, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) amended the federal policy to enact stricter nutritional standards. In 2004, TDA issued the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy. The revised rules limit the availability of certain foods and establish portion size restrictions for some items.

All public schools in Texas that participate in federal child nutrition programs (such as the school breakfast and lunch programs) must comply with the policy or risk losing reimbursement for those programs.

TDA is working with the schools and parents to fight against childhood obesity, which is responsible for an increasing number of children suffering from diabetes and heart disease. Studies show that the life expectancy of children today is now shorter than that of their parents.

Does the policy prohibit teachers from using competitive foods as an instructional tool in the classroom? Teachers may occasionally use FMNVs, including candy, for instructional purposes as long as the food items are not consumed. Any leftover candy can be distributed to elementary students after school ends for the day, to middle school students after the end of the last lunch period, and to high school students in areas other than the cafeteria.

What about classroom parties? Cupcakes, cakes, cookies, and other baked goods typically used as part of student birthday parties are now allowed by TDA if permitted by the campus. However, items brought for classroom consumption must meet the portion size restrictions specified in the TDA Nutrition Policy. Federal regulations do not allow FMNVs to be served in the food service area during meal periods so parties may not be celebrated during lunch in the cafeteria.

Do the rules apply to school pizza parties?

If pizza parties occur during lunch, the pizza must meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program nutrition requirements for a reimbursable meal. According to TDA, that means pizza brought in from outside sources must be analyzed to ensure the meal is in compliance.

Pizza that meets the TDA requirements is available for parties through RRISD Food Services. The pizza is also served with fruits or vegetables, which meets the standards for a reimbursable meal. The district is currently trying to negotiate with outside vendors to provide pizza that meets the nutritional guidelines and can be purchased inexpensively.

Pizza ordered from restaurants that does not meet the nutritional standards may only be served after school at the elementary level and after the last lunch period at the secondary level.