

### What are the standards for school food?

Food and drink provided across the school day must meet the statutory School Food Standards. There are two sets of standards; one for school lunches and one for school food other than lunch, including food and drink provided at breakfast, mid-morning break, after-school clubs and tuck shops.

**Within these standards, foods high in sugar, fat and salt are restricted across the school day or are not permitted at times other than lunch.** For example:

- Confectionary, chocolate or chocolate coated products cannot be served across the school day.
- Cakes, biscuits, pastries (except yoghurts or fruit based desserts containing 50% fruit) are restricted to lunchtime only.

To download a checklist or for more information visit <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/resources/>

### How do the standards affect school and PTA events?

Under the standards for school food other than lunch, there are exemptions in place for food provided at parties, celebrations to mark religious or cultural occasions, or at fund raising events.

As food provided at events like this are **often higher in sugar, fat and salt** e.g. cakes or chocolate products, the standards recommend schools do not hold more than **one of this type of event in a term** i.e. a maximum of six times per school year.

This is in order to promote a balanced eating message and reflect the schools commitment to the school food ethos within your School Food Policy. Your policy should also include information about exceptions to the School Food Standards.

### What about weekly fund-raising events?

Where fundraising events are held regularly, for example a weekly tuck shop or after school sale, then the food provided **should meet** the standards for school food other than lunch.

### Importance of a balanced offer

The messages children receive from adults and the environment around them shape their attitudes and habits around food and eating.

Talking about 'healthy eating' isn't always very engaging or motivating, especially for children. When helping children to understand what this means, it is most helpful to talk about getting a **balance** of the nutrients our bodies need. **There are certain foods we should eat lots of and regularly and other foods we should eat less of and not so often.** Using the word 'balanced' rather than healthy; steering clear of categorising food as healthy or unhealthy and using the Eatwell Guide will help children learn about eating well.

We need to make sure that what we model in schools and the language we use when talking to children about food and diet is positive and consistent – and PTA events can help with this too.

### Why PTAs are being asked to get involved in Sugar Smart

We understand that PTAs are integral to raising money for activities and supporting school budgets. However, we also see PTAs playing an important role in supporting the school food environment by modelling balanced eating to children and families and following the School Food Standards where possible.

#### What can you do?

Consider your food and drink offer at PTA events – **are you offering a balance?** For example, are you providing fruit and vegetables, starchy foods and sources of protein?

**Are you limiting the amount that can be purchased?** Think about offering smaller portions of foods that are high in fat and sugar and/or limit the amount of these foods that pupils can purchase. Have a look at our Sugar Smart fundraising ideas (below) for alternative items to sell too!

**Inform families** – Let families know what food and drink will be available at school and PTA events in advance. If you choose to sell sweets, cakes and confectionary, parents and carers can plan other food that day accordingly. Hold your fundraising sales after school for the same reasons.

**Drink options** - Water and milk are Sugar Smart drink options. These should be more readily available than other drinks.

### Managing Food Allergies and Intolerances

Schools take food allergies and intolerance seriously. Schools & PTAs should work closely with parents to support children with medically-verified allergies or intolerances. Safe avoidance of allergens cannot be guaranteed when cakes are made at home. Further information can be found on the [Foods Standards Agency's website](#).

### Food as Rewards

Praising achievement, behaviour, and other attributes is an integral part of raising self-esteem and celebrating successes in schools.

Giving food as a reward can set up an emotional response to food, having unhelpful habits around 'when' and 'why' we eat can often make it harder to eat a balanced diet, especially if the foods we use to make ourselves feel good has a high fat, high sugar content.

School plays a vital role in helping children establish healthy habits towards food and eating. Using food as a reward is not **permitted within the school food standards**. Providing a certificate & sticker in assembly or as part of a school event would be a Sugar Smart celebration.

### Sugar Smart Fundraising Ideas

- **Include fruit at your cake sale!** Ask for cake or bake sale items to contain fruit. Fruit can help naturally sweeten cakes and be used to reduce the amount of sugar that is used within original recipes.
- **Have a savoury sale!** Bread varieties or other savoury snack items help provide families with alternative ideas to sweet snacks.
- **Physical activity fundraisers** are a great way to clock up those activity minutes and have fun at the same time– Sponsor children and families to move a daily mile (or more!). Hold cycling events. Walk to school or pedometer challenges can also get the whole family involved.
- **Have a non-food sale! Sell items linked to Sugar Smart** – Water bottles or plastic tubs which can store healthy snacks are a great idea and can be used for packed lunches.
- **Sell glow sticks** or bracelets as an alternative to sweets at school discos!
- **Grow foods or plants** and sell these at a School Farmers Market
- Hold a **non-school uniform** or fancy dress day and ask for donations.