



Q&A - Smart Snacks Standards and Arizona Healthy Schools Act

QCUSD Child Nutrition Department

Q: What foods/beverages may be sold or served during the school day?

A: All foods and beverages sold or served to students during the school day must comply with USDA Smart Snacks standards and the Arizona Healthy Schools Act. This applies to school meal programs, fundraisers, vending machines, school stores, and school-wide events or celebrations. Single classroom celebrations are addressed separately below.

Q: When may foods/beverages be sold or served outside the school meal program?

A: Foods and beverages sold or served outside the school meal program—including fundraisers—must not compete with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. These activities are only permitted during the following times:

- 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after breakfast and lunch service.
- 30 minutes after the final dismissal bell.

Q: What regulations apply to foods/beverages served during a single classroom celebration, such as a birthday party or classroom snack?

A: Foods and beverages provided free of charge during a single classroom celebration are exempt from USDA Smart Snacks standards. However, they must still comply with the Arizona Healthy Schools Act requirements.

Q: What are the USDA Smart Snacks standards?

A: Smart Snacks are federal nutrition standards that apply to foods and beverages sold to students during the school day. These standards limit calories, sugar, fat, and sodium and are designed to promote healthier food choices.

Q: What is the Arizona Healthy Schools Act?

A: The Arizona Healthy Schools Act (ARS 15-242.01) prohibits public schools from serving or selling ultra-processed foods that contain certain additives and dyes during the school day. Food/drinks brought from home for the student's personal consumption are exempt.

Q: What are the prohibited ingredients per the Arizona Healthy Schools Act?

A: Titanium Dioxide, Potassium Bromate, Propylparaben, Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO), and artificial dyes - Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 3, Blue 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6.

Q: Who is eligible to request a fundraiser exemption?

A: Only high schools may request a fundraiser exemption to sell items that do not meet Smart Snacks standards. However, all exempt fundraisers must still comply with the Arizona Healthy Schools Act requirements.

Q: Are caffeinated beverages allowed to be served or sold at school?

A: Caffeinated beverages are not permitted for students in grades K–8. For grades 9–12, caffeinated beverages may be served or sold only if they contain no more than 10 milligrams of caffeine per fluid ounce and meet all other applicable nutrition standards. Soda and energy drinks are prohibited at all grade levels.

Q: Where can we learn more or get help?

A: For guidance or more information, please visit the [QCUSD Local Student Wellness Policy](#) or email us at Child_Nutrition@qcusd.org.

Additional Resources

QCUSD has developed lists of compliant foods and beverages that meet USDA Smart Snacks Standards and comply with the Arizona Healthy Schools Act. These resources are intended to support schools, parents, PTOs, and clubs in identifying appropriate items for school-related activities.

Items are categorized into two guides: one for products available for purchase through the Child Nutrition Department and another for suggested items typically available at grocery stores.

The Child Nutrition Department also offers Birthday Packages as a fun and convenient option for classroom celebrations.

Please use the links below to access these resources:

- Healthy School Snacks – [Child Nutrition Department \(Cafeteria Purchase\)](#)
- Healthy School Snacks – [Suggested Retail Items \(Grocery Store Purchase\)](#)
- Birthday Packages – [Menu Options and Pricing](#)

Final responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the site or organization.

Per the District's Local Wellness Policy, all food brought onto campus for student consumption during classroom celebrations must originate from commercial grocery or food service stores or from other commercial kitchens certified to comply with Maricopa County Environmental Service regulations.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.