



# QCUSD Child Nutrition Department

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## Understanding Food Sales and Fundraiser Compliance

### **Q: Can we sell food and beverages during school fundraisers?**

**A:** Yes, but there are important guidelines. Any food or beverage sold during the school day must meet USDA Smart Snacks Standards, unless the fundraiser is part of a school's approved exemption.

### **Q: What are Smart Snacks Standards?**

**A:** These are federal nutrition standards that apply to all food and drinks sold to students during the school day. They limit calories, sugar, fat, and sodium to promote healthier choices.

### **Q: Are caffeinated beverages allowed at school?**

**A:** No. Caffeinated beverages marketed as energy drinks or containing more than 4mg of caffeine per ounce are not allowed on any QCUSD campus. Additionally, caffeine is completely prohibited for grades K–8, in line with USDA regulations.

### **Q: What types of sales must follow these regulations?**

**A:** Smart Snacks rules apply to all food and beverage sales during the school day, including:

- Fundraisers
- A la carte programs
- Vending machines
- Student stores

If it's being sold to students during the school day, it must meet Smart Snacks guidelines or qualify as an approved exemption.

### **Q: When is the “school day” defined?**

**A:** The school day is defined as the period from 12:00 a.m. (midnight) and ends 30 minutes after the final bell rings. This means food sales before school, during lunch, and immediately after school are still considered part of the school day.

### **Q: Are there restrictions on timing around meal service?**

**A:** Yes. Food and beverages, even if part of a fundraiser, may not be sold during meal times, as this would compete with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Food and beverage sales are not allowed from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after published meal service times. *(Note: The HS student stores are exempt from this rule.)*

**Q: Are any fundraisers exempt from Smart Snacks rules?**

**A:** In grades K–8, all food and beverage fundraisers must follow USDA Smart Snacks Standards at all times. Only **high schools** can request exemptions to sell items that don't meet the standards. However, even exempt fundraisers cannot take place in the cafeteria during meal times, as they would compete with school meals.

**Q: What are the guidelines for high school food fundraisers?**

**A:** QCUSD High Schools are allowed the following number of exempt fundraising weeks per year:

- 1st Term – 2 weeks
- 2nd Term – 3 weeks
- 3rd Term – 2 weeks
- 4th Term – 2 weeks

**Q: Who decides when exempt fundraiser weeks happen?**

**A:** The Student Council selects and publishes the dates at each school. Fundraisers are open Monday through Friday during the selected weeks. Clubs or organizations must submit a request to the High School's Student Council, which ensures that no duplicate items are sold.

**Q: Who is responsible for submitting the fundraiser exception request?**

**A:** The Student Council Advisor is responsible for submitting the exception request by emailing [Child\\_Nutrition@qcusd.org](mailto:Child_Nutrition@qcusd.org). All requests must be submitted at least two weeks in advance for approval.

**Q: Can individuals sell food or drinks to students?**

**A:** No. Students, staff, or visitors may not privately sell food or beverages to students on school grounds unless it is part of a school-approved fundraiser.

**Q: What types of food-related fundraisers are permitted under district guidelines?**

**A:** Here are some options:

- Foods that are not intended for consumption at school (e.g., frozen cookie dough).
- Food and beverages that meet Smart Snack Standards.
- Food sales outside the school day (evenings, weekends, or off-campus events).
- Approved exempt fundraisers (only at High Schools).

**Q: Where can we learn more or get help?**

**A:** For guidance on Smart Snacks compliance and fundraiser planning, visit the district's [Student Wellness policy](#) website or email us at [Child\\_Nutrition@qcusd.org](mailto:Child_Nutrition@qcusd.org).

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