



**RIDE Child Nutrition Program
School Meal Programs & Competitive Foods
as of July 1, 2014 v1**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently issued “All Foods Sold in Schools” regulations; they are nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children at school during the school day. These snack foods and beverages are called “competitive foods” because they compete with the healthy reimbursable meals offered through the USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

USDA, RI general laws, RIDE Nutrition Standards and the RI Healthy School Coalition Nutrition Recommendations ensure that only healthier foods and snacks are sold or offered to RI school children.

This information below should assist school meal programs in determining if a food or beverage meets the definition of a competitive food item. Only compliant competitive items may be offered or sold by the school food service program.

Definitions

School Campus Definition

- All areas of the property that are under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

School Day Definition

- The period from midnight before, to 60 minutes after the end of the official school day.

Competitive Foods Definition

- All food and beverages (other than USDA reimbursable meals) that are sold or distributed on campus during the school day.
- This does not include foods brought to school in a bagged lunch or brought in for activities such as birthday parties or other celebrations.

Compliant Food Definition

- A compliant food or beverage is one that meets the RI and USDA nutrition standards for competitive foods.
- A non-compliant food or beverage does not meet these nutrition standards and cannot be sold or distributed in RI schools during the school day.

National School Lunch / School Breakfast Entrée vs. A la Carte Item

- A la Carte items are considered “Competitive Foods” EXCEPT:
 - Any USDA lunch or breakfast program entrée item may be sold individually as an a la Carte item
 - These a la Carte items would be exempt from the USDA competitive nutrition standards if the item is sold as a competitive food on the same day (or the day after) the entrée is part of a USDA reimbursable meal

Who Standards Apply To

- All RI elementary, middle and high schools

Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods

Foods must also meet several competitive food nutrient standards:

- Calorie limits:
 - Snack items: No more than 200 calories
 - Entrée items: No more than 350 calories
- Sodium limits:
 - Snack items: No more than 230 mg (reduced to no more than 200 mg sodium per item on July 1, 2016)
 - Entrée items: No more than 480 mg
- Fat limits: No more than 30% of the item's calories come from fat.
- Saturated fat: Less than 10% of calories come from saturated fat.
- Trans fat: Zero grams
- Sugar limit: No more than 35% of weight from total sugars in foods

The use of artificial sweeteners is not allowed.

Competitive Foods

Elementary School Standards

Competitive foods that can be sold in Elementary School are limited to the following:

- Whole or cut fresh fruit and/or vegetables
- Kitchen-prepared (unprocessed) fruit and/or vegetable side dishes

Middle and High School Standards

Competitive foods sold in middle or high schools must:

- Meet all of the competitive food nutrient standards, and be one of the following:
 - A grain product that contains at least 50% whole grain, or
 - Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
 - Be a combination food that contains at least 1/4 cup of fruit and/or vegetable; or
 - Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber) only thru July 1, 2016

Competitive Food Exemptions

The following are exempt from all nutrient standards:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water.
- Canned and frozen fruits with no added ingredients except water, or are packed in 100% juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup.
- Canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes to maintain the quality and structure of the vegetable.

The following are exempt from the total fat standards:

- Reduced fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella).
- Nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters.
- Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats.
- Seafood with no added fat.

Combination products are not exempt and must meet all the nutrient standards.

The following are exempt from the saturated fat standards:

- Reduced fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella).
- Nuts and seeds and nut/seed.
- Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats.

Combination products are not exempt; They must meet all the nutrient standards.

The following are exempt from the total sugar standards:

- Dried whole fruits or vegetables; dried whole fruit or vegetable pieces; and dehydrated fruits or vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners.
- Dried whole fruits, or pieces, with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes (i.e., cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries).
- Products consisting of only exempt dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats.

Competitive Beverages

Competitive beverages that can be sold in Elementary School are limited to the following:

Up to 8 ounce portions of milk

- Unflavored low fat milk (1% fat), or
- Unflavored or flavored fat free milk , or
- Milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
- Bottled water, plain

Free, fresh, potable water must be available to students at meal time in the cafeteria.

Competitive beverages that can be sold in Middle and High School are limited to the following:

Up to 12 ounce portions of

- Unflavored low fat milk (1% fat), or
- Unflavored or flavored fat free milk , or
- Milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP

Any size of plain water (with or without carbonation)

Up to 12 ounce portions of

- Water, flavored or sweetened with 100% fruit juice
 - maybe carbonated water
 - no added sweetener allowed
- 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice
 - may be carbonated
 - no added sweetener allowed
- Fruit or vegetable based drinks
 - with no less than 50% vegetable or fruit juice
 - no added sweetener allowed

The use of artificial sweeteners is not allowed

Caffeinated beverages are not allowed.

Free, fresh, potable water must be available to students at meal time in the cafeteria.

For more information on Competitive Foods go to:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/cnp/NutritionPrograms/HealthySnacksBeverages.aspx> or

Contact Becky Bessette at Becky.bessette@ride.ri.gov or at 401-222-4253.