

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Due to new regulations on school wellness policies put in place by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Dorchester School District 4 will have to regulate treats brought into the school (birthday treats, celebratory treats, etc.) starting this upcoming school year. Treats must follow new "Smart School Snack" guidelines. These new regulations were effective July 1st.

The Dorchester 4 Schools wellness committee (comprised of teachers, students, parents, administrators, and other staff) worked throughout this past school year to put together information for parents and students to help them understand this new policy and what it means moving forward. Please read the attached letter and information. On page 3, under the "**Why the List???**" section, it describes the guidelines that must be followed for treats sent into school. There is also a list of acceptable treats to be sent in. We will be sending out (and posting on our website) a more user friendly list of "Smart School Snacks" that are acceptable.

Please know that teachers and staff will be following these same guidelines for treats in the school. Also, we want to reiterate that these new guidelines were put in place by the federal government and **NOT** by Dorchester School District 4.

We do, however, have to follow these new guidelines and appreciate your understanding and cooperation. We understand that there will be an adjustment period, as there is with any new policy put in place, but we ask that you read this information and adhere to the new guidelines.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Earle  
Director School Food Services

Dear Parents and Guardians:

At Dorchester 4 schools, we work hard to ensure that students' minds and bodies are ready for learning each day. In addition to the hard work our teachers and staff do every day to prepare students for success in the classroom, we can also work to encourage healthy eating and physical activity, leading them to lifelong success. By helping them start healthy habits early in life, we can help reduce our children's health risks and increase their chances for longer, more productive lives.

Parents/guardians should:

- Honor their child's birthday by sending non-food treats such as stickers or pencils.
- Ensure all food sent to school for birthday celebrations promote healthy food choices (see the list of healthy snack ideas attached to this letter).
- Ask your child's teacher what non-food or healthy rewards/incentives they are utilizing in the classroom.
- Become involved in planning school holiday parties that include games, crafts, and healthy foods and beverages.
- Participate in brainstorming ideas for healthy, non-food focused fundraisers for the school.

To encourage your participation in this plan, attached to this letter you will find suggested food and beverages. These items are consistent with the intent of the District's Local School Wellness Policy and will promote healthful eating among our students. Also note that students will not be allowed to bring in junk food items such as chips, candy, drinks, etc. to school.

As educators, caregivers, and loved ones, we all want the best for our students. Thank you for joining us in giving students healthy opportunities to celebrate important events and achievements.

If you have any questions, please contact the school. We are looking forward to making our school the healthiest it can be, so our students can do their best work. Have a healthy day!

Sincerely,

Ruth Mims  
Principal

## List of Acceptable Snacks/Foods for School Parties

### ***Why the List???***

School snacks must conform to the USDA guidelines, which include calorie limits, sugar caps, and nutrient requirements.

- **Calorie Limits:** All snacks, including extras like butter and cream cheese, must have no more than 200 calories per serving.
- **Fat Ceilings:** Fat must make up no more than 35% of the total calorie count, with saturated fat content at less than 10% and Trans fat content at 0.
- **Sugar Caps:** Only 35% (or less) of the weight in any snack food may come from sugar.
- **Nutrient Requirements:** In order to meet the USDA's guidelines, snacks must either be rich in whole grains, contain at least a quarter cup of fruit and/or vegetables, have a fruit, vegetable, protein food, or dairy product as the first ingredient, or contain 10% or more of the percent daily value of potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin D, or calcium.

### **Acceptable Snacks/Foods**

#### **Homemade Options:**

- Grapes, apples, tangerines, bananas and pears are the perfect portable fresh fruit treat.
- Frozen grapes are great for hot days.
- Kids always get a kick out of rabbit bags, which combine fresh fruit and vegetables in individual servings.
- Sliced vegetables with spicy bean salsa are a fun and exciting snack!
- Popcorn trail bags are easy. Sweet and salty come together when you mix unflavored popcorn with dry roasted peanuts and a handful of raisins. Package each serving in a mini paper bag for personal deliveries.
- Strawberry crunchies are a snack that kids can make themselves!
- You can't go wrong with an assortment of sliced veggies and a flavorful low-fat dip! Find over 100 snack recipes here.
- For a pretty and engaging snack, try apple butterflies!
- Fruit parfaits abide by the guidelines and are totally gorgeous. Try this recipe for a fun layered parfait.
- Oven fries are a great snack - use sodium-free ketchup or mix it up with sweet potatoes instead of regular potatoes.

#### **Packaged Snacks:**

- 100 calorie packs are great options for certain foods. Try low-fat, whole grain crackers and whole grain pretzels. Sweets, even in 100 calorie packs, often have more than 35% of their weight as just sugar, while fried foods, like potato chips, have way more fat than is allowed. To be fewer than 35% calories from fat a food cannot have more than 35 calories of fat per 100 calories.
- Baked tortilla chips with 100 calorie packs of guacamole dip can be fun treats.
- Baked potato chips will meet the guidelines at 120 calories and 3 grams of fat.
- Baked whole grain pita chips are a handy option.
- Fill pita pockets with veggies and a little nonfat Italian dressing for a fun snack.
- Prepared veggie and fruit trays with low-fat dips are speedy, fuss-free options.
- For a calcium-rich option, try single-serving, sugar-free pudding cups.
- Light, low-fat yogurt comes in cups and squeeze tubes. As long as it meets the sugar requirements, it is good to go.
- Whole grain cereals like shredded wheat, oatmeal "O's", and Chex are great snack options without added sugar.

- Brown rice cakes are great options. Kids can top them with nut butter and fruit.
- Boxed raisins and other dried fruits are great.
- Whole grain fig cookies like Fig Newton's will work.
- Fruit cups and individual fruit serving cans packed in juice are great packaged snacks, too.

You may visit <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/> and find snacks that are acceptable. There is also a calculator on their site that you can put in information on a food, and it will tell you if it meets the requirements of the Wellness Plan. When using this calculator, we have found it is more accurate if you just put in your food as a single serving.

The School Cafeteria will also have snacks that are approved for sale, if you wish to order and purchase from them.