

OVERVIEW OF HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION

Under [Section 10-215f](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.), Healthy Food Certification (HFC) requires each board of education or governing authority for all public schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to certify annually to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) whether they will follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs. The CNS applies to all competitive foods offered for sale to students on school premises at all times from all sources including cafeterias, school stores, vending machines, fundraisers, and any other sources of food sales to students.

- **“Sale”** means the exchange of foods and beverages for a determined amount of money or its equivalent, including tickets, coupons, tokens, and similar items. This includes any activities that suggest a student donation in exchange for foods.
- **“School premises”** include all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the local or regional board of education, the regional vocational-technical school system or the governing authority district or school.

Districts that choose to comply with the CNS receive 10 cents per lunch, based on the total number of reimbursable lunches (paid, free, and reduced) served in the district in the prior school year. Information on the HFC requirements and a list of current HFC districts are available on the CSDE's [HFC](#) webpage.

CONNECTICUT NUTRITION STANDARDS

The CSDE developed the CNS with input from the state nutrition standards committee. The CNS focuses on limiting calories, fat, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars, eliminating trans fat, and promoting more nutrient-rich foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, legumes, and lean meats. These standards are based on current nutrition science and national health recommendations from the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and national health and nutrition organizations. For more information, see the CSDE's [CNS](#) webpage.



FOOD EXEMPTIONS

Foods that do not comply with the CNS can only be sold to students on school premises if the local board of education or school governing authority votes to allow exemptions and the following criteria are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the foods are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

The “**school day**” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. An “**event**” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity, e.g., soccer games, school plays, and school debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. “**Location**” means where the event is being held. For example, cookies can be sold on the side of the soccer field during a soccer game, but cannot be sold in the school cafeteria while a game is played on the soccer field.

FUNDRAISERS

Fundraisers held on school premises must comply with the CNS unless the board of education votes to allow exemptions and the fundraisers meet the three exemption criteria. Most fundraisers can be modified to comply with the HFC requirements, except for food sales during the school day, e.g., candy and bake sales. Districts can contact the CSDE for assistance in reviewing current fundraisers to determine if changes are needed. Foods that comply with the CNS can be sold as fundraisers at any time on school premises if the selling time frame complies with the [state competitive foods regulations](#) (Section 10-215b-23 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies) and the state statute to offer nutritious low-fat foods (C.G.S. Section 10-221p). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, *Food and Beverage Requirements for Fundraisers*, and *Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools*.

FOODS GIVEN TO STUDENTS

HFC does not apply to foods given to students. “Given” means that foods are provided free of any charge (including the exchange of tickets, coupons, and similar items) or suggested donations. If a fee is collected for foods “given” to students, these foods must comply with the CNS.

HFC APPLICATION

All Connecticut public school districts that participate in the NSLP must submit the annual *Healthy Food Certification Statement – Addendum to Agreement for Child Nutrition Programs (ED-099)* to the CSDE by July 1 of each year. For more information, see the CSDE’s [HFC Application](#) webpage.

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RESOURCES

Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cf/cfg.pdf

Complying with Healthy Food Certification PowerPoint:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/complyhfc.pdf

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322422

Connecticut Nutrition Standards PowerPoint:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/cnspt.pdf

Food and Beverage Requirements for Fundraisers:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/fundhfc.pdf

Food and Beverage Requirements for School Stores:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/storehfc.pdf

Food and Beverage Requirements for Vending Machines:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/vendhfc.pdf

Fundraiser Requirements PowerPoint:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/hfc_fund.pdf

Guide to Competitive Foods in Schools:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cf/cfg.pdf

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322420

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322432

Resources for Healthy Foods and Beverages in Schools:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/resourceshf.pdf



For more information, visit the CSDE's [Healthy Food Certification](#) and [Competitive Foods](#) webpages or contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103, 860-807-2075, susan.fiore@ct.gov.

This handout is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/hfc/reqhfc.pdf.

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