Healthy drinks
in primary schools



There is a legal duty for local authorities and schools to **promote healthy drinking in schools**. The Welsh Government and Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes recommend a wholeschool approach.

Drink brought into school for personal consumption can be subject to restrictions at the discretion of the local authority or governing body of a school. Almost all primary schools in Wales specify:

- **only water on desks, or freely available, in the classroom**; and,
- **only water and milk during break times**.

Schools should create an environment and culture where it is **normal and easy for children to drink healthily**. School staff, along with parents/carers, are vitally important in the development of healthy drinking habits for life, through **consistent messages and role modelling**.

Water and milk should be the only drinks at break times in primary schools because:

- this helps children normalise drinking water throughout the school day, and into adulthood, as the **best hydration method**;
- water quenches thirst and is **easily and freely accessible** to children in school and at home;
- milk is a good source of **protein, calcium and other vitamins and minerals**;
- water has no additional calories, helping to **maintain a healthy weight**;
- drinking water can help to **prevent a range of health issues** such as headaches, bladder and bowel problems;
- water and milk **do not damage teeth**, unlike fruit juices and soft drinks, which include 'free sugars' and/or artificial sweeteners; and,
- squash and flavoured water, including sugar-free varieties, encourage children to develop a 'sweet tooth' and do not provide a nutritional benefit.

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