

Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Food and Beverage Guidelines for Celebrations/Recognitions

Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) considers the care of students a top priority and seeks to work with parents/legal guardians to manage life-threatening food allergies and other special dietary needs of the student.

VBCPS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. It is recommended foods offered on the school campus meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School guidance. These include snacks for celebrations or classroom snacks provided by staff or parents/legal guardians.

All parents/legal guardians, volunteers and students wanting to bring outside food into the school to be shared with other students must receive prior approval and must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. It is recommended all foods and beverages be selected from the “Healthy Snack and Beverage Ideas” on the Office of Food Services website.
2. Outside food and beverages to be shared with students must be pre-approved by your school at least **two** days prior to the celebration event.
3. All items being served must be bought and must remain in the original sealed container with the manufacturer label intact (from the store).

Further details regarding USDA Smart Snacks can be found on the following website:

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/smartsnacks.pdf>

Note: VBCPS Food Services Department also offers a service to parents to assist with their child’s school birthday celebration. Please refer to the **“Elementary Birthday Celebration” Order Form**.

Healthy Snack and Beverage Ideas*

Beverages	Fruits and Vegetables	Whole Grains	Proteins
Water	Fruit trays, salads, or fruit kabobs	Whole grain crackers, pretzels, or cereal bars	Trail mix with seeds, dried fruit, and whole grain cereal (no nuts per VBCPS)
Fruit-infused water	Vegetable trays, salads, or vegetable kabobs	Low-fat or air popped popcorn with no added butter or salt	Seed butter served with fruit or whole grain crackers
100% fruit juice with no added sugar	Canned fruit or fruit cups in water or 100% fruit juice	Small whole grain bagels, waffles, or pancakes topped with fruit or seed butter	Fat-free or low-fat yogurt served alone or as a fruit or vegetable dip
Fruit smoothies made with frozen fruit with no added sugar and low-fat yogurt	Frozen fruit, such as grapes, strawberries, or blueberries	Graham crackers	Low-fat cheese served with fruit or whole grain crackers
100% fruit juice slushes with no added sugar	Dried fruit with no added sugar	Baked whole grain tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip	Hummus served with vegetables or whole grain crackers

*Contact your school's cafeteria manager to purchase Smart-Snacks compliant foods and beverages for celebrations. Alternately, a [smart snack calculator](#) can be utilized instead.

Non-Food Celebration and Reward Ideas

Prizes	Physical Activity	Special Events	Recognition
Pencils, erasers, or rulers	Lead a special physical activity break	Go on a scavenger hunt	Give a certificate or ribbon
Stickers, slap bracelets, or playdough	Host an outdoor obstacle course for students to bike or run through	Host a story walk: laminate book pages and walk along an outdoor path to read	Post a sign in the classroom or on a bulletin board
Tickets or tokens towards a large prize	Provide extra recess or physical education time	Let students choose a special activity or be a teacher's helper	Give a shout-out in the morning announcements
Books or coloring books	Turn on music and let students dance	Host a special dress day where students can wear hats or pajamas	Allow the student to wear a crown or special sash
Frisbees	Have a themed parade around your school	Invite a special guest to participate in an activity	Recognize the student during an assembly

[Non-food celebrations](#) and [healthy food and beverage ideas](#) come from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Celebrations that Support Child Health.

Additional alternatives to Food Sharing for Birthdays

- Have lunch with your child or grandchild.
- Read a book to the class.
- Create craft activity with students in your child's classroom.
- Purchase a book for the library and dedicate it in your child's name
- Purchase small school materials for the classroom in honor of your child