



WATER-ONLY SCHOOL TOOLKIT

Go
the
H₂O

this pack contains...

We would like to acknowledge the work of MidCentral District Health Board for the development of the original water-only school toolkit: He kura whakatairinga i te inu wai Māori.

Regional Public Health

HAUORA Ā IWI KI TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
Better health for the greater Wellington region



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Go the H2O and be a water-only school

Schools have the opportunity to nurture not just learning but health and wellbeing of their students.

Drinking sugar sweetened drinks and fruit juices is a significant factor in the development of dental caries (also known as tooth decay or cavities). Dental caries affects eating and sleeping and causes considerable pain as the infection develops. It has a negative effect on health and wellbeing and is a frequent cause of school absenteeism.¹

From the 2017/18 NZ Health Survey it is estimated that 40,000 children (0-14 years of age) had teeth removed due to decay or other oral disease (abcess, infection or gum disease) in the past twelve months²

School nutrition policies that include ways to restrict intake of sugar and promote water (and plain milk) intake have the potential to improve child oral health, particularly in lower socio-economic areas.³ Staying hydrated can positively influence brain function and may reduce the chances of low mood, tiredness and concentration loss.⁴

Creating a school environment that promotes and supports healthy choices is one way that schools can help students reach their potential.

This is why the Ministries of Education and Health are encouraging all schools to become water-only. Being water-only means making sure that water (and plain milk) is the only drink in your school. When we choose water, it means we're not drinking sugary drinks which contribute to many preventable health conditions like obesity, tooth decay and type 2 diabetes. Research by the Health Promotion Agency found that 93% of parents and caregivers think it is important for schools to limit access to sugary drinks.⁵ Schools that have moved to being water-only have seen benefits to teaching and learning, as well as to student health and wellbeing.

This toolkit has been designed with the education sector to bring information and resources together to make it easier, to put your water-only policy into action for your school.

References

1. WHO Technical Information Note October 2017 Sugars and Dental Caries. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259413/WHO-NMH-NHD-17.12-eng.pdf;jsessionid=E3E950BDD08D52D944AFBEFEA272E3CE?sequence=1>
2. https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2017-18-annual-data-explorer/_w_0811ceee/_w_36feb2fa/#/!explore-indicators
3. Low sugar nutrition policies and dental caries: A study of primary schools in South Auckland S Thornley, R et. al. Marshall, Health Intelligence, Auckland Regional Public Health Service, 2 Section of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, The University of Auckland, 3 Paediatric Services, Oral Health Department, Greenlane Clinical Centre, Auckland District Health Board and 4 Millenium Institute, Human Potential Centre, Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health doi:10.1111/jpc.13449
4. Executive summary and conclusions from the European Hydration Institute expert conference on human hydration, health and performance. D Benton, H. Braun, J.C Cobo, C Edmonds et al. Nutrition Reviews Vol73(S2):148-150
5. Health Promotion Agency. (2015). In Fact. Research facts from the HPA, 4 (29).

Go the H2O and be a water-only school

How to get started to become a water-only school

Each school will follow its own path to becoming water-only. Schools that have already started the process have used the following activities to get started:

- Consult with your board and your community about becoming a water-only school, create a nutrition or water-only policy if you don't already have one.
- Review your current nutrition policy and add statements about being a water-only school, it helps to include practical examples of what this means to your school.
- Review canteen and school lunch order menus to make sure water and plain milk are the only drink options.
- Review fundraising, class rewards and celebration ideas to make sure they fit with your nutrition and water-only policy.
- Work with local food outlets to create a water-only school zone around your school.

There is a water-only schools section on the Regional Public Health website at www.rph.org.nz/water-only-schools that has lots of tools, resources and links for more information. This page will be regularly updated with the latest information and tools.

We wish you all the best in becoming a water-only school.

water - only schools grading scale

GO THE H2O: HOW IS SUCCESS MEASURED?



BRONZE LEVEL 1

Water and plain reduced fat milk are the **only** drinks permitted at school. This means all other drinks are **actively** discouraged from being brought into school and are also **not sold** at school, including through canteens and lunch orders. Many schools are already at Bronze level!

STEPS TO GO THE H2O AND BECOME WATER-ONLY

- Water and plain reduced fat milk are the **only** drinks permitted at school, including breakfast clubs and vending machine drinks.
- All school sporting events are sugar-free. This includes prizes.
- Staff are actively encouraged to have less sugary drinks in their staffroom.
- School has developed a water-only policy.



SILVER LEVEL 2

Bronze level 1 achieved

Water and plain reduced fat milk are the **only** drinks permitted at school and at school events, and sugary drinks are **not used for rewards or fundraising purposes**. This means all other drinks are **actively** discouraged from being brought into school and are also **not sold** at school, including through canteens and lunch orders.

STEPS TO GO THE H2O AND BECOME WATER-ONLY

- The majority of fundraising activities are free from sugary drinks.
- Students actively participate in promoting **Go the H2O**.
- Staff are actively encouraged to have less sugary drinks in their class/staffroom.
- School has embedded a water-only policy.



GOLD LEVEL 3

Silver level 2 achieved

The school has **nutrition/water-only policy** with **guidelines and procedures** ensuring that water and plain reduced fat milk are the **only drinks permitted at school and school events, including rewards, celebrations, sporting fixtures and fundraising**.

STEPS TO GO THE H2O AND BECOME WATER-ONLY

- **100%** of school fundraising activities are free from sugary drinks.
- School reviews the terms and hire agreement for external agencies who use the school buildings for events that are child focused with reference to the nutrition/water-only policy.
- Sugary drinks are not sold at school or school events. This includes fundraising and items sold by the canteen or as part of lunch orders.
- There are no sugary drinks available in the staffroom.
- Staff utilise health based professional learning and development workshops.

Frequently asked questions about going water - only

What is a water-only school?

A water-only school has a nutrition or water-only policy in place that promotes water and plain milk as the only drinks available at school. They will have a plan to make sure their policy is followed. Some schools will also make sure that water and plain milk are the only drinks at events such as sports days and camp and not used for fundraising, as a reward or at celebrations.

We already encourage students to bring only water to school in their drink bottles. Does this mean we're a water-only school?

Encouraging students to bring only water to school is a great way to promote water as the best choice of drink for school and to ensure they're hydrated throughout the day. However, to be a water-only school, other drinks should not be available for sale through the school canteen or lunch order.

Why should we consider adopting a water-only school policy?

Having a water-only policy at your school means you have an appropriate plan in place to make sure water and plain milk are the only drinks available at school. Developing a policy also helps you to consult with and get support from the community.

We have a school canteen/lunch order which provides a range of drinks. How do we go about changing this?

If your school specifies in the nutrition/water-only policy that water and plain milk are the only drinks to be provided at school, then the school canteen will need to make sure they align with the policy. You can even put this into their canteen contract. For lunch orders, you can simply request the supplier removes any drinks that aren't water or plain milk from the menu. For advice and support around changing canteen menus and lunch orders contact your local [Heart Foundation Branch](#).

How do we stop our students from buying sugary drinks from surrounding food outlets?

As part of your policy you could include information about students not leaving the school grounds during the day to buy drinks from local shops. Your school could also make an agreement with local shops to not sell drinks other than water and plain milk to students before and during school. The Heart Foundation will support your school to work with local food outlets to improve the food and drinks sold.

Can we supply fizzy drinks and juices at special events such as the school disco and gala?

As part of being a water-only school, water and plain milk should be the only drinks available during these types of events. Find out about using our [Healthy Futures Water Kit](#) or [Healthy Families Lower Hutt's](#) Hydration Stations.

Some of our school fundraising events sell sugary drinks, do we have to stop selling these and what else could we sell?

As a water-only school, selling sugary drinks shouldn't be used for fundraising. Canterbury Public Health have developed a free guide for schools titled 'Healthy Events and Fundraisers' which can be downloaded from www.rph.org.nz/water-only-schools. The Heart Foundation have also developed helpful resource 'Healthy fundraising ideas for schools'.

Is going water-only at school, telling parents what they can and cannot give their children?

Frequently asked questions about going water - only

No. We have the opportunity to nurture the wellbeing of our students by providing healthy drink choices and avoiding sugary drinks. Schools which have already moved to being water-only, have seen immediate benefits in student behaviour and learning. According to recent research by the Health Promotion Agency, 93% of parents and/or caregivers think it is important for schools to limit access to sugary drinks.

How is switching to water, going to change health?

Sugary drinks are a key contributing factor to childhood obesity, development of type 2 diabetes and poor oral health. By providing healthy drink choices in a school environment, the healthy choice becomes the easy choice and denormalises the growing consumption of sugary drinks.

Where can I find resources to support our water-only activities?

There is a water-only schools section on the Regional Public Health website www.rph.org.nz/water-only-schools that has lots of tools, resources and links for more information. This page will be regularly updated with the latest information and tools.



Water dispensers with fresh fruit and ice are part of the 'water kit' available from Healthy Futures.



Example of a Hydration Station supplied by Healthy Families Lower Hutt.



The 'How Much Sugar Do You Drink?' poster is one of the resources available from the Health Promotion Agency.

water - only schools letter template

DATE

Tēnā koe parent/caregiver:

_____ (school name) is going 'water only'.

To support the health and wellbeing of our students and staff, from _____ (date) our school will join a growing number of schools in the greater Wellington region and become 'water-only'.

Why is this happening?

'Water-Only Schools' began in 2016 and is a Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health initiative, supported by Regional Public Health and a range of partners (see below).

How does it work?

Being 'water-only' means plain tap water and plain, fat reduced milk will be the only drinks our students are able to have at _____(school name) .

What do I need to do to support us going 'water-only'?

- give your child a drink bottle they can take to school
- encourage them to fill the drink bottle with plain tap water at home and at school
- at home, keep sugary drinks for extra special occasions only.

Why do we love water?

- New Zealand tap water is safe to drink straight from the tap, plus it's FREE
- unlike sugary drinks, water doesn't cause tooth decay, obesity, or diabetes
- when we're thirsty, water is perfect.

We appreciate your support. If you have any questions, do contact us.

Nāku, nā (yours faithfully)

[insert name here]

<http://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/schools/water-only-schools/templates/>

water - only schools suggested policy template



Add your
school logo

Our school is water-only

Rationale

We care about the health of our students

Sugary drinks¹ are one of the most significant causes of poor oral health and contribute greatly to childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

We care about their achievement

Consuming sugary drinks is associated with problem behaviours. Studies have found poor diet and nutrition are associated with lower academic achievement.

Our commitment

We will ensure parents and students receive clear, consistent messages about the importance of healthy choices and the impact of sugary drinks by:

- Continuing to educate students about the importance of healthy drink choices and the benefits of consuming water.
- Actively promoting water as the best option in school publications.
- Ensuring staff commitment to model healthy drinking habits.

And we will create an enabling environment by:

- Actively discouraging sugary drinks being brought to school by students.
- Providing water (and plain reduced fat milk) as the only drink option for students.
- Allowing students access to water during class time.
- Not associating our school with programmes that promote sugary drinks.
- Ensuring school lunch options don't include sugary drinks.
- Ensuring sports teams will only use water as their source of hydration.
- Not selling sugary drinks as part of sausage sizzles, the school gala or other celebrations.

1. Any beverage that contains added caloric sweetener usually sugar. The main categories of sugary drinks include soft-drinks/fizzy-drinks, sachet mixes, fruit drinks, cordials, flavoured milks, flavoured waters, cold teas/coffees, and energy/sports drinks.

<http://www.rph.org.nz/public-health-topics/schools/water-only-schools/templates/>

Case study: Ōtaki College Composite School

ŌTAKI COLLEGE HEALTHY EATING & DRINKING POLICY

Background

Ōtaki College is a low decile co-ed college with approximately 400 students.

The college started a healthy food policy seven years ago when the 'Fuelled 4 School' policy was introduced by the Labour Party. This policy has since been dropped by the current government.

Ōtaki College canteen is slightly different in that it is run by the school and the emphasis is not on profit. They currently break even generally. The college is a low decile school and hence the reason for not being profit orientated. They decided it was more important to their student's health, more conducive to learning and have a positive impact on behaviour if they were providing wholesome affordable food to students who may not have had it otherwise.

What they did

Teachers, senior students and the canteen manager collaborated to decide on healthier options in the canteen. The success of this has been due to the following points:

- They listened to students and conducted surveys to find out what was popular.
- When unhealthy food was taken away they found it best to replace them with an alternative. For example, deep fried chips were removed but replaced with oven baked wedges.
- Healthier choices were placed at eye level and in prominent places. For example:
 - chippies were placed behind and below the counter and bowls of fruit were put on the counter
 - water was placed at eye level and in the most prominent place in the chiller, and
 - fizzy's were removed and smaller serve-sized juice packs were put at the bottom of the chiller.
- Pies used to be offered every day but they now only have two pie days a week (pie consumption has dropped - they only sell approximately 12 pies instead of 40 on the pie days).
- The menu was changed with the seasons and made to look appetizing:
 - toasted sandwiches/panini/soup in winter, and
 - wraps/salads/sandwiches/sushi in summer.
- They took advantage of the Fonterra milk plan.
- The Heart Foundation funded breakfast and lunch activities where students were able to try new interesting foods for free. This encouraged them to later purchase these items.
- New foods were priced cheaply to encourage students to try new healthier options.
- Student led activities such as a sushi making day/healthy food posters competition raised education around food and nutrition.
- A voucher system was offered on healthy foods, e.g. buy four soups and get the fifth free.
- With New World supermarket supporting the healthy food policy they have reduced the amount of fizzy drinks being consumed. They used to see kids with big bottles of V, etc. They don't see that now.

Important points

Education and including students at every step were what the staff at Ōtaki wanted emphasised.

Written by Vanessa Broughton, Healthy Futures Trust.

Case study: Brooklyn School

GOING WATER-ONLY, A SCHOOL LEADS COMMUNITY CHANGE

Background

Brooklyn School is a full primary school (Years 0-8) situated up on the hill in the heart of Wellington. There are 462 children at the school. The school's mission statement captures their approach to learning: Mauria Te Taki - Take Up the Challenge.

What they did

They took up the challenge of becoming a water-only school as part of their commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment and this has been achieved in a very positive way.

The first step was the school working with Healthy Futures Trust to turn the school gala water-only. They switched sugary drinks for 'dressed up' water. Beautiful jugs of water with fresh fruit and ice: strawberry and borage, orange and tangelo and lemon and mint. The water was free, refreshing, looked attractive, and the kids and adults loved it! The success led to setting up a 'water kit' that consists of large glass water dispensers on stands. Very quickly water became the new norm at school sports prize giving's, discos and family events such as Matariki. The school's lead quickly influenced the wider community with the local junior sports community and neighbouring schools borrowing the 'water kit'.

The school principal and board of trustees were approached by a group of parents asking if they would consider adopting a water-only policy. They endorsed this as it "made official what we were already doing".

The school have also installed new water fountains, purchased a 'water kit' and send gentle reminders out in newsletters prior to family events; "Note: We are a water-only school therefore no sugary drinks please."

The 'water kit' has been a key tool in the school's approach to consistently and positively promoting water-only. To purchase your own 'water kit' contact water@healthyfutures.org.nz or visit www.healthyfutures.org.nz/resources.



Case study: Randwick School

RANDWICK SCHOOL SUPPORTS BRAIN HYDRATION

Background

Randwick School in Moera Lower Hutt is a decile 3 year 1-8 school focused on caring for others and achieving greatness. The school decided to become water-only last year, in 2016, as they wanted children to understand the benefits of brain hydration.

Water is the only drink on offer at Randwick School with many of the school's children now having their own drink bottles in the classroom to hydrate regularly throughout the day. The school is now currently looking at a way to provide drink bottles to those children who do not have their own, to increase the 'water' message.

Each classroom has a sink for re-filling drink bottles and multiple water fountains available around the school. The school's position is to promote water as the preferable drink of choice.

Teachers have taken up the challenge to be 'water-only' role models and regularly drink water in front of the children to highlight the importance of hydration. The school's teachers have noticed better concentration and work habits from the students and a sense of responsibility for their own hydration.

Parents have commented very favourably on the water-only initiative and are extremely supportive of the school's water-only message.

Written by Simonne Goodall, Principal of Randwick School.

Case study: Seventh-day Adventist School

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOL EMBRACES WATER-ONLY

Background

The school has seen a number of positive changes in students since introducing water-only messages at school. Seventh-day Adventist school principal, Karla Mitchell, says, "Our students are definitely drinking more water and we seldom see any other drinks at school. By limiting the quantity of sugar consumed at school, we have noticed that the students are more settled and focused on their work."

The water-only initiative began earlier this year when the school decided to look at becoming water-only. The school approached their Health Promoting Schools Advisor, Siaso Mafi for advice and support.

"We noticed many children coming to school with sugary drinks and we knew this was not beneficial for their teeth, their weight, their behaviour, or their learning," says Karla.

What they did

To show our commitment to encouraging our students to drink more water, we kicked off by raising awareness on the health benefits of drinking water. With support from the Heart Foundation we set up a large display in our school foyer showing the amount of sugar in various types of drinks. We then asked parents to show their support by asking that children only drink water at school.



After that, we had a visit from Rowie Szeszeran-McEvoy of Max Fitness College, who came and taught the students five simple ways to be healthy. One of these was drinking more water. Regional Public Health donated drink bottles to each of the students and the school had water filters installed at the drinking fountains.

"Feedback from parents has been extremely positive. This is just the beginning for us. Along with the water-only initiative, we have also improved our fitness programme. Students can now exercise for longer period and are more active in the playground," says Karla.

Another lesson the students have learnt from fitness coach Rowena was to 'eat more stuff that comes out of the ground'. The school has recently begun its very own vegetable garden. Students have built the garden beds along with designing and constructing frames to keep pests out and planted a variety of vegetables. Next term students will harvest, cook and eat the vegetables they have grown.

Photo: Seventh-day Adventist school students show off their water bottles to promote the water-only message.

Resources for making the change

A range of resources and communication tools are available for your school to download and use by visiting the Regional Public Health website at www.rph.org.nz/water-only-schools.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Example letter to parents/caregivers

Suggested policy template | English

Suggested policy template | Te Reo Māori

RESOURCES

Health Promotion Agency resources

How much sugar do you drink | Poster

Congratulations to the player of the day | Certificate

100% water pack | Posters, table talkers, stickers

Dental Association resources

Acidity of drinks | Poster

Drinks damage teeth | Poster

Keeping your teeth fit...easy as! | Poster

What are sugary drinks doing to your body? | Poster

Heart Foundation resources

We want healthy food, drink & activity in schools | Infographic

How can we work together? | Information sheet

Healthy Futures resources

Water Kit | Email water@healthyfutures.org.nz or go to www.healthyfutures.org.nz/resources

This kit is available for schools to purchase. It comes with three water dispensers (with stands), recipe ideas, a top up jug, storage containers and cool ideas for setting up your stand.

Useful links for more information

Education Gazette: 2016: The year of the water-only school?

<https://tinyurl.com/y36rrpcl>

Ministry of Education website page "Promoting Healthy Lifestyles"

<https://tinyurl.com/yys7x7gu>

www.fizz.org.nz

This website has information, YouTube clips, links etc. about fighting sugar in soft drinks. For example Susan Dunlop, principal of Yendarra Primary School in Otago, explains how her school went sugar free, and what transpired...

One man's mission to get rid of our sweet tooth

Rob Beaglehole, dentist, TV interview, 13 minutes

<http://bit.ly/1TCYO11>

Dentist encourages all marae to be sugar-free

This video is in Te Reo (except Rob's words). The second item in the video is about Rob Beaglehole.

<http://bit.ly/1XvjRoP>

Seven Sharp Story - Truth about fizzy drinks

Do our kids really know the truth about fizzy drinks? Story from Seven Sharp.

<https://tinyurl.com/y5clxmzb>

Stickers

For example:

<https://www.slickerstickers.co.nz/catalogues>



Tap into water, NMDHB

www.nmdhb.govt.nz/campaigns/tap-into-water/education-providers/

Toi Tangata Waiariki

www.toitangata.co.nz/resources

Healthy Futures' fundraisers resource

www.healthyfutures.org.nz/resources#healthy-fundraising

Rethink sugary drinks

www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/videos

Enviroschools

www.enviroschools.org.nz

Organisations working with water-only schools

Regional Public Health

www.rph.org.nz

Phone (04) 570 9002

Facebook: Regional Public Health

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HAUORA Ā IWI KI TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
Better health for the greater Wellington region

Heart Foundation

www.heartfoundation.org.nz

Phone: (04) 472 2780



Healthy Futures

www.healthyfutures.org.nz



Bee Healthy

www.beehealthy.org.nz - Visit the 'Helpful Websites' page

Phone 0800 Talk Teeth or 0800 825 583



Healthy Families Lower Hutt

www.healthyfamilieslowerhutt.org.nz



Ministry of Education

www.govt.nz/organisations/ministry-of-education/



Sport Wellington

<https://www.sportwellington.org.nz/>

