

Classroom Rewards

Federal law requires every school district to have a local wellness policy. These policies address nutrition education, physical activity, school meals and all other foods and drinks available at school. Since foods and drinks are a part of every school day, local wellness policies can build healthy school environments that support successful students eating smart and moving more. Research shows that children and teens who eat smart and move more focus better and have fewer behavior problems. They also have better math, reading and writing test scores. As families, educators and administrators, you have the chance to put the policy into practice. You can make a difference by encouraging healthy options for fundraising, concessions, school stores, vending, classroom rewards and school celebrations.

Rewards and incentives are one way to encourage good behavior and improve academic performance. Your local wellness policy can define how teachers reward students. There are many good ways to reward students **without** using food or treats. Food and treat rewards can act against healthy eating messages and interfere with natural hunger cues. The power of the simple words “you did a great job” works well because respect and words of appreciation go a long way for everyone. It is important to encourage self-confidence and self-motivation so that students value their own work.

Take Action Now

School Board Members

- Are classroom rewards covered in your district’s local wellness policy? If not, include in your policy limits on food as a reward or incentive.
- Show your support for the local wellness policy

School Health Advisory Council/School Wellness Committee Members

- Find out what kind of rewards teachers give students in the classroom.
- Help school staff understand why food is not the best option for classroom rewards and discuss other ideas.

Principals

- Enforce the district wellness policy for classroom rewards that encourage non-food rewards and physical activity.
- Consider adopting a stricter classroom rewards policy for your school.

PTA Members and Families

- Encourage change in policy by talking about rewards with other parents, teachers and community members.
- Support the classroom rewards and incentives used by your child’s teacher that follow the local wellness policy.

Reward and Incentive Ideas

Ways to reward students

- Extra music and reading time
- Time for music and dancing
- Music while doing school work
- Chat break at the end of class
- Extra computer time
- Free time at the end of class
- Day for watching a movie
- Group activity
- Games
- Homework coupon
- Coupon for prizes and privileges
- Certificate/trophy/ribbon/plaque
- Gift certificate to local non-food merchants
- Free pass to sporting event or play
- Walk break from class
- Fun walk with the principal or teacher
- Guest presenter in class
- Field trip

Elementary students

- Taking things to the office
- Taking care of the class pet
- Eating with the teacher
- Prizes from a treasure box
- Pencil toppers
- Stickers

- Pencils
- Stars or smiley faces
- Paperback books
- Extra recess
- Leading the class to lunch, recess, library or other adventure

Middle School Students

- Sitting with friends
- Music concert at school
- Pencils
- Paperback books
- Pep rally
- Magazine subscriptions
- T-shirt/hat/sunglasses
- Step counter

High School Students

- Sitting with friends
- Music concert at school
- Pep rally
- Paperback books
- Magazine subscription
- T-shirt/hat/sunglasses
- Prime parking spot
- Recognition with morning
- Announcements

Example Classroom Rewards Policy in North Carolina

Clay County Schools:

In a school environment that supports healthy behaviors, teachers are encouraged to use non-food rewards for individual students or classes. Schools shall be supplied with examples of effective non-food rewards. "Foods of minimum nutritional value" shall not be used as rewards. If food is used, only nutrient-rich foods in appropriate portion sizes shall be given to students.

For more information on local wellness policy...

www.nchealthyschools.org
www.nutritionnc.com
www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com

