

Becoming a water and plain milk only school



Sugary drinks* are one of the most significant causes of poor oral health and contribute to childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes.

Schools can provide healthy environments for staff, students and their whānau, and being a water and plain milk only school for students is a great way to start ...

* 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, iced teas/coffees, energy/sports drinks.

... and it's easy! Follow these three practical steps to help you get started.

Step One

Share your goal

Your staff are your best role models

Get their support by explaining why this is important to the school community and what impact it will have on them. Encourage them to drink water and plain milk at school and talk to the students and their whānau about the benefits of drinking water and plain milk.

Involve the students

Ask them to help your school to be a water and plain milk only school and to suggest ways to make this happen. (See [teaching /lesson ideas on page 18](#))

Involve them in the planning, decision-making and guidelines development, and promotion stages of becoming a water and plain milk school.

Make water easily available at school

Check that your water fountains are easily accessible for all students and nice to drink from and that there are places for students to refill their drink bottles easily.

Use drink bottles

Encourage staff and students to have their drink bottles in the classroom and at events, and to refill them throughout the day.

School vision and values

Align your water and plain milk only school goal with your school vision and values.

Promote the benefits of drinking water

Make sure everyone in your school community knows why drinking water and plain milk is important – for their health and for their learning.

Let everyone know

Publicise your school's aim to be a water and plain milk only school with the students, their parents/whānau, the people that use the school facilities, the parents' groups and fundraising committees, and the local food/convenience shops.



Step Two

Develop your own guidelines, procedures or policy

Involve your wider school community

Involve and seek support from your school, staff, students, their parents and whānau, and people in your community like the Health Promoting Schools facilitator, the Heart Foundation, oral health promoters, dentists, and community health promoters. Find out from them what they think is important to include.

Share your policy or guidelines

Let your students, staff and wider school community know you are committed to promoting healthy food and drink choices.

Step Three

Promote your water and plain milk only status

Be proud of your water and plain milk only position

Write and talk about it often in your school newsletters, in the classroom, in assemblies, parents and whānau hui, and on social media.



Sharing your message with the wider community



Step Three Continued

Celebrate your success

Contact the local media, design a new school sign with “Proud to be a water and plain milk only school” on it, or have a school water party!

Catch them when they are good

Reward or acknowledge those who use drink bottles and drink from the water fountains at school.

Promote water as the best choice

Place laminated posters near water fountains and water bottle refill areas, and near school entrances.

Use pictures to tell the story

Use 100% Water banners in your newsletters and social media sites to share your message with the wider school community.

Break down the barriers

Ensure that students and their families who speak other languages understand what being a water and plain milk only school means.

Water only at all events

Let those using your school in the evenings and weekend know that your school is water and plain milk only. Encourage them to commit to making their events and activities water and plain milk only too.

Spread the word

Ensure that those who visit your school to relieve, assist in the classroom, or work with or perform to the students, know of your water and plain milk only school status.

**For free resources and downloads visit the
Nutrition and Activity Hub at:**

Student challenges and activities

Indicative Curriculum Links & Learning Outcomes:

Health & Phys Ed: Personal Health & Personal Development; Healthy Communities & Environments
Social Sciences Identity, Culture and Organisation

- Students will discover why drinking water and plain milk benefits their health and improves learning.
- Students will gain an understanding of the reasons why it is important to communicate with and gain the support for this goal from the local community and students.
- Students will demonstrate and use creative methods to get the important messages out to all students and to the local community to help make their water and plain milk only school policy a reality.

Links to English, Arts. Best Suited to Curriculum Levels 2-3

Tuning in to water Have students brainstorm ideas about why water is good for us. Visit the following website for teacher background reading:
www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=284&id=1494#5

Did they know ...? Ask the experts Why is water (and plain milk) the best choice to drink rather than soft drinks, fruit juices, sports drinks, and flavoured milk. Invite dental and health professionals to talk to the class. Prepare questions e.g. how does water help our teeth, help us concentrate, stop us becoming overweight or obese? Compose and perform raps/chants/dances about the importance of drinking water. Discover adverse consequences.

A water and plain milk only school Did they know 10% of New Zealand schools are water and plain milk schools only? Share your school vision with students. Students brainstorm ways they can help achieve this e.g.
- Have students map and locate all the school water fountains; Do we have enough? Can all students, of all ages and heights access these fountains? Are they all working correctly and are they clean and nice to drink from? Do we need more fountains in the school ground? Who could we approach if we need more (sponsors or presentation to BOT)? Survey and map where students can fill water bottles both inside the school and the playground.

Promoting benefits of drinking water to parents and the community Why do students think it is important that their parents and people in the community know about their school being a water and plain milk only school? Discuss and list reasons. Have groups brainstorm different, interesting and exciting ways they could promote their school policy: a display of colourful posters at the local supermarket; fridge reminders for parents to refill water bottles; a school-wide parent and community slogan competition on the benefits of drinking water; regular updates and promotions on school/class websites/blogs/Facebook; groups shoot a short YouTube video promoting the benefits of drinking water & plain milk only and/or the school policy 'in action'; have students share their success with local media.

Water and plain milk only day Involve the students in planning and running a water and plain milk only day for parents and local community. Activities could include: Informative talks from dental and health professionals, nutritionists and local sports trusts representatives on the benefits of water/plain milk only, healthy eating and regular exercise; students prepare and act out dramas to get these messages across; play student videos promoting these health themes; prepare multi-choice health theme quizzes for parents and visitors; decorate the room with being healthy slogans and banners; have a 'water party'; invite local media to report on the school event.

Rewarding other students Have students keep a sharp lookout for other students who are using water bottles and the fountains at school. Discuss how they could reward these students, e.g. presenting them with student designed certificates/badges at assembly; a weekly website list update.