



# CPS Approach to: Healthy Hydration



(Updated: May 2026)

(This document will be continually revised and updated to reflect best practice.)

# Healthy Hydration



## Purpose

To ensure all children stay adequately hydrated throughout the school day while maintaining an organised and focused learning environment.

This policy reflects the school's commitment to promoting health and wellbeing in line with:

- **Curriculum for Excellence (Health and Wellbeing)** – supporting children to make informed choices about food and drink
- **Scottish Government: Better Eating, Better Learning** – promoting consistent whole-school approaches to nutrition
- **NHS Health Promotion guidance** – encouraging water and milk as the most appropriate drinks for children
- **Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)** – ensuring pupils are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured and included

## Rationale

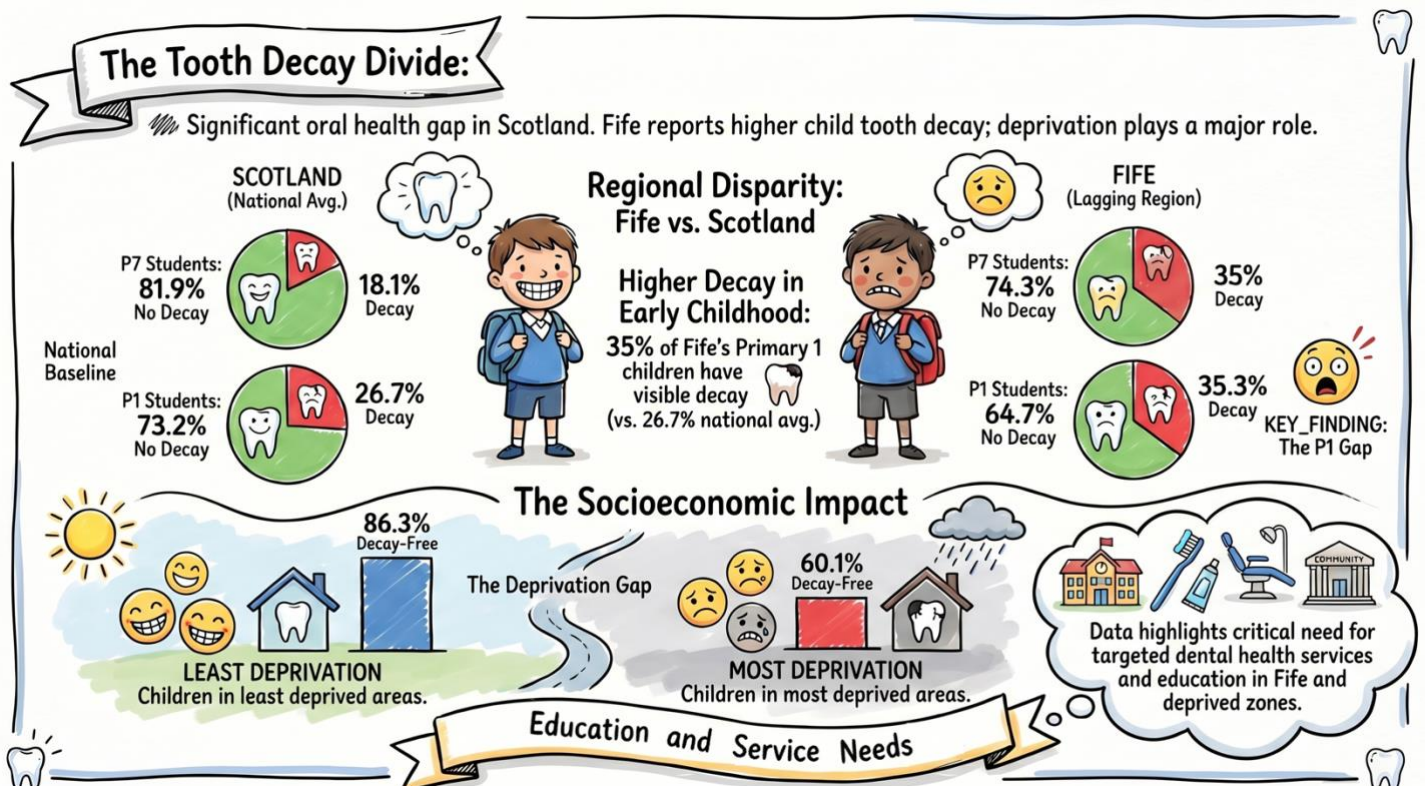
Drinking water is essential for children's overall health as it:

- helps to maintain energy levels
- supports brain function
- improves concentration
- regulates body temperature, especially during physical activities or warm weather

In addition, healthy hydration:

- Encourages healthy, life-long, life-wide habits for wellbeing
- Meets Scottish Government requirements for water access

Unfortunately, the data around tooth decay in primary school-aged children is alarming:



**For these reasons, plain drinking water is the only drink permitted in classrooms and learning spaces during the school day.**

### **Policy Aims**

- Ensure all pupils have free access to drinking water throughout the day.
- Promote water as the only classroom drink.
- Minimise disruption to learning.
- Develop attitudes of responsibility in pupils towards healthy choices.



### **Water Provision and Guidelines for Water Bottles in School:**



- Each child is encouraged to bring a reusable, clearly labelled water bottle to school every day.
- Water bottles should be filled with plain water only; juices, sodas, or other flavoured drinks are not permitted.
- Bottles should be made of durable, non-breakable material to ensure safety and cleanliness
- Bottles can be topped up as required via refill stations in class.
- Water will be available at lunchtimes
- School will support pupils to hydrate regularly as required.

### **Use of Water Bottles in Class**



- Bottles must be labelled and contain plain water only.
- Stored in designated areas or with the child, as determined by the teacher.
- Children may drink quietly without disruption.
- During teaching and learning activities, pupils should ask permission when accessing their or filling up their water bottles
- Teachers will remind students of drinking times and ensure water breaks are efficiently managed.

### **Hygiene and Maintenance:**

- Children are responsible for taking their bottles home at the end of each day to be thoroughly cleaned and refilled.
- Parents/guardians should ensure bottles are in good condition and replaced if damaged or worn out.
- Children should be reminded not to share water bottles to prevent the spread of germs.

### **Special Considerations:**



- Families should inform the school of any medical conditions that require children to drink more frequently, and appropriate accommodations will be made (see appendix 1).
- During special school events or trips, teachers will make arrangements to ensure children have sufficient access to water.

## Drinks Not Permitted in Class

- Fruit juice,
- Flavoured water,
- Flavoured milk drinks

These items are permitted, in small amounts, as part of a healthy packed lunch or snack but preferably, we encourage all of our families to provide water and milk at these time too.

## Drinks Not Permitted in School



- Fizzy drinks
- Sports drinks
- Energy drinks

These drinks are typically **never allowed in school**. As a rare exception to this rule (at the school's discretion in partnership with our families), fizzy drinks may be available in small quantities but only as part of a special event.

**Sports drinks and energy drinks are never permitted due to their potential of having high caffeine and salt levels**

## Why Juice is Not Allowed

- Contains free sugars which can harm teeth – Fife has the highest levels of tooth decay in Scotland
- Encourages preference for sweet drinks.
- Can cause spills, damage and distraction.
- Water provides a consistent, healthy standard.

## Why Sugar-Free Drinks Are Not Permitted

While sugar-free drinks may contain less or no sugar, they are **not recommended in a primary school setting** because they:

- Reinforce a **preference for sweet tastes**, which conflicts with health promotion messages
- Often contain **acids that can damage dental enamel**, even without sugar
- May include **additives or caffeine (in some cases)** that are not appropriate for children
- Undermine a **clear and consistent whole-school approach** to healthy eating and drinking



Our approach reflects national guidance encouraging schools to promote **water as the default drink**, supporting positive lifelong health behaviours. Furthermore, a water-only approach is more inclusive as it:

- Ensures **consistency for all pupils**
- Avoids **inequality or comparison between drinks brought from home**
- Supports **clear expectations for families and staff**, including supply staff
- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the school day.

## The School's Position:

Sugar-free drinks are **better than sugary drinks**. However, in a school environment, our goal is to give our children the **optimal** experience and information, not just "better than". Water remains the **gold standard** for hydration and health.

# Further Reading



## Scottish Government

1. [Healthy Eating in Schools: Guidance 2020](#)
  - Statutory guidance supporting the implementation of the Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020.
  - Includes specific standards for drinks available throughout the school day and confirms that free drinking water should be available to pupils.
2. [The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools \(Scotland\) Regulations 2020](#)
  - The legislative framework governing food and drink provision in Scottish schools.
  - Forms the statutory basis for hydration and drink standards in schools.
3. [Schools \(Health Promotion and Nutrition\) \(Scotland\) Act 2007](#)
  - Places duties on education authorities and schools to promote health and wellbeing and ensure compliance with nutritional standards.
4. [Setting the Table: Nutritional Standards and Practical Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Providers in Scotland](#)
  - Nutritional Standards and Practical Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Providers in Scotland - Children 0-5 years.

## Education Scotland

5. Curriculum for Excellence: [Health and Wellbeing Principles and Practice](#)
  - Establishes health and wellbeing as the responsibility of all staff.
  - Provides a curriculum context for teaching pupils about hydration, healthy lifestyles and self-care.
6. [How Good Is Our School? \(HGIOS\) 4](#)
  - Particularly relevant to:
    - QI 2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection
    - QI 2.4 Personalised Support
    - QI 3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion
  - Supports schools in creating environments that promote physical wellbeing, including access to water.

## Care Inspectorate

7. [Food matters; nurturing happy, healthy children](#)
  - Guidance for nurseries to provide children with well-balanced, minimally processed, and nutritious meals and snacks that take account of individual dietary, cultural, and allergy requirements

## Food Standards Scotland

8. [The Eatwell Guide](#)
  - National healthy eating model used across Scotland.
  - Includes recommendations on maintaining adequate hydration and choosing healthier drinks.
9. [Food Standards Scotland Healthy Eating Resources](#)
  - Educational materials that support learning about nutrition and hydration.

## NHS Scotland

10. [NHS Inform: Hydration](#)
  - Evidence-based information about the importance of hydration, signs of dehydration and health benefits of adequate fluid intake.

## Scottish Water

11. [Scottish Water: Water for Life](#)
  - Curriculum-linked learning resources explaining the importance of drinking water and hydration.
  - Particularly useful for pupil learning and awareness campaigns.



## Contents:

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**1. CPS Healthy Hydration Policy: Health Accommodation Waiver**

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**2. CPS Healthy Hydration Poster**

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## CPS Healthy Hydration Policy: Health Accommodation Waiver

This waiver is designed to support families who require a medical accommodation for their child's hydration while maintaining the core values of the **CPS Approach to Healthy Hydration Policy**.

<b>Pupil Name:</b>		<b>Parent/Carer Name:</b>	
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### Policy Acknowledgement

I confirm that I have read and understood the **CPS Healthy Hydration Policy (May 2026)**. I understand that the school's approach to hydration is designed to support the brain function, concentration, and long-term dental health of *all* the pupils in the school. I also understand that while the school typically permits only plain water in learning spaces to ensure consistency and avoid inequality between pupils, an exception is being made for my child based on a healthcare requirement.

### Terms of Accommodation

To ensure my child's health needs are met while supporting the school's learning environment, I agree to the following:

- **Access to Hydration:** My child will have access to their drinks bottle throughout the day, including **outwith designated breaks and lunchtimes**.
- **Permitted Drinks:** I will ensure that I provide my child with only **sugar-free** drinks to be consumed in the classroom.
- **Discretion & Opaque Bottles:** To maintain school-wide consistency and minimise comparison between pupils, I agree that if the drink is coloured, it will be contained within an **opaque (non-see-through) drinks bottle** to remain discrete.
- **Bottle Standards:** To ensure safety in the classroom, the bottle will be **clearly labelled** with my child's name and made of **durable, non-breakable material**.

### Hygiene and Responsibility

- **Daily Maintenance:** I accept responsibility for my child ensuring the bottle is taken home at the end of every day to be **thoroughly cleaned and refilled**.
- **No Sharing:** To prevent the spread of germs and to uphold the policy for others, my child will be reminded **not to share** their flavoured drink with other pupils.

### Supporting the Learning Environment

- **Classroom Etiquette:** My child will be encouraged to **drink respectfully** without causing disruption to others.
- **Permission:** During active teaching and learning activities, my child will follow the expected procedure of **asking permission** before accessing or refilling their bottle to minimise disruption to the lesson.

### Health Awareness

I acknowledge the school's guidance that even sugar-free drinks can contain **acids that may damage dental enamel** and reinforce a preference for sweet tastes. I agree to monitor this accommodation in partnership with the school to ensure the best outcomes for my child's wellbeing.

<b>Parent/Carer's Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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### Relevant Policy Insights for Parents

In choosing to use this waiver, the school encourages parents to remain mindful of why the default policy is water-only. The policy highlights that **Fife has the highest levels of tooth decay in Scotland**, and water provides a consistent, healthy standard for all. By using an opaque bottle and sugar-free options, you are helping the school maintain **clear expectations for all families** and avoiding potential inequality, status-related peer pressure and comparisons between children in the classroom.



# Healthy Hydration

## Why Water is the Only Choice at Cowdenbeath Primary



Why Water is the Gold Standard

### BOOSTS CONCENTRATION AND FOCUS

Proper hydration with plain water directly supports brain function and energy levels.

### ESSENTIAL FOR DENTAL HEALTH

Water has a neutral pH and zero sugar, protecting enamel from erosion.

### BUILDS HEALTHY LIFELONG HABITS

Water provides neutral hydration without conditioning a child's preference for sweet flavors.

### THE HIDDEN DOWNSIDES OF ALTERNATIVES



### SUGAR-FREE DRINKS DAMAGE TEETH

Most sugar-free drinks contain acids that cause enamel erosion and tooth sensitivity.

### SWEETENERS DISRUPT APPETITE

Intense artificial sweeteners can reinforce cravings for sweet foods and disrupt appetite regulation.

### CLEAR AND FAIR MESSAGING

A water-only rule is inclusive, easy to follow, and prevents social comparison.