**Spending the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund: a guide & toolkit for local authorities and schools**

**Supported by:**





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# Local authority guide to spending the Healthy Pupil Capital Fund

**Healthy Pupils Capital Fund**

A Healthy Pupils Capital Fund (HPCF), totalling £100m nationally, is to be allocated to schools in 2018/19 from monies generated from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy The Fund is intended to improve children’s and young people’s physical and mental health by improving facilities for physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing and medical conditions.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced guidance for local authorities who will receive allocations of the HPCF and then distribute monies to schools: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/capital-allocations). It should be noted, that:

* Funding is for 2018-19 only.
* Funding is in addition to the School Conditions Allowance and the PE & Sports Premium.
* Grant recipients are able to pool funding or take advantage of match-funding opportunities, but are responsible for providing assurances on how their allocation has been spent.
* Local authorities will be required to provide details of how they have spent their HPCF in the same way, the as they do for the School Conditions Allowance.
* Your borough Children’s Services team will be able to give you more detailed information on the funding you may have received.
* Directors of Public Health can help you make decisions on how it is spent.

**Recommended action**

To ensure that the HPCF is spent in a way that improves the health and wellbeing of children in your borough we are encouraging you to:

* Contact your local Director of Public Health and Director of Children’s Services to enquire about current plans for the Fund.
* Use the list of ideas of where best to invest. You may wish to consider:
* What are your local priorities and needs for pupil health and wellbeing?
* What existing facilities are there?
* How will the HPCF be used to complement existing or new funding opportunities?
* How will the investment be sustained if it requires staffing and maintenance?

**Investment Ideas**

Schools may want to invest in facilities that promote:

|  |
| --- |
| **Healthy eating** Water fountains, cooking equipment, teaching and catering kitchens, dining spaces (seating and tables), cookers/fridges/freezers. |
| **Physical activity (nb. The PE and Sport Premium can also be used for these)**Sports halls and gyms, swimming pools, playgrounds and active play spaces, fixed sports equipment, sports pitches, hard courts, athletics tracks, floodlighting, pitch drainage, bike stands.  |
| **Mental health** Spaces for mental health support. |
| **Improving access (nb. Additional funding provided via the School Condition Allocation can also be used fund these adaptations)**Modification of facilities could improve access for pupils with disabilities, such as; hoists for swimming pools, adaptations to cooking facilities, adaptations to changing rooms, wheelchair accessible paths in garden spaces, sports wheelchairs, hydrotherapy pools. |

The additional monies provided by the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund are a one off opportunity to collectively address key aspects of children’s health in London, in particular their diet and weight – we have more overweight and obese children than any other comparable city in the world. As the monies are non-recurring and small for any one school they might not fund extensive projects.

As such, we think that there is a case for us to work together and have a particular focus on **water fountains** - these will enable each school to reduce the sugar intake of their pupils by providing an alternative to unhealthy sugary drinks.

You can find more information about this throughout this toolkit; it includes resources to support schools.

## The case for school water fountains

**Main points:**

* Most children drink too many sugary drinks, these are a source of excess calories in the diet, leading to obesity and can result in poor dental health
* Most children do not drink enough water, water is essential for hydration and brings a number of health and education benefits to children
* Schools are a key environment to develop positive health behaviours such as drinking more water and fewer sugary drinks
* Messages learned at schools may also be practised at home and have a positive impact on family members and elsewhere

**What is the issue we want to address?**

* ****Over 1 in 5 children in reception are overweight or obese and around 2 in 5 school children in year 6 are overweight or obese[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Nationally, children are consuming more sugar than is recommended. Soft drinks and fruit juice contribute to 22% of sugar intake for 4-10 year olds and 33% for 11-18 year olds[[2]](#footnote-2).

Recommended

level

* This excess sugar contributes to excess calorie intake and is a major concern for dental health – children in London have, on average, 1 decayed, missing or filled tooth by the time they turn 5. This is higher than the average for the rest of England[[3]](#footnote-3).
* Teenagers in London are less likely to make healthy hydration choices than young people in the rest of the UK – less than 40% are actively choosing to drink water during the school day[[4]](#footnote-4).
* A quarter of the 2,000 13-16 year olds surveyed said they would drink more water during the school day if there were reminders or prompts, and a fifth would drink more if they thought it was healthier than other drinks[[5]](#footnote-5)

**What else is happening in London to help?**

Over the next three years, The Mayor of London has committed £750,000 to increase access to tap water in London. A network of water bottle refill points and drinking fountains will be implemented with the aim of reducing plastic bottle waste. We hope that this will also inspire a culture of drinking more water, over sugar-sweetened drinks.

**What are the benefits of drinking water?**

As well as having an impact on obesity rates and dental health, keeping children hydrated is particularly important for their education.

Health benefits of staying hydrated with water:

* Reduced risk of being overweight
* Reduced risk of headaches
* Reduced risk of constipation
* Improved dental health

Education benefits of staying hydrated with water:

* Improved concentration levels
* Less fatigue and irritability
* Increased performance levels
* More time in school and less time spent at GP or Dental appointments

**What can we do?**

We are encouraging schools to help improve the health and wellbeing of children in London by ensuring that children have access to and are encouraged to drink water in school. The provision of free access to drinking water in class is associated with improved water intake but many schools do not provide this.

Evidence suggests that the most effective programmes to help increase the amount of water drunk by school children included 3 elements:

* Installation of water fountains
* Provision of reusable water bottles for children
* Behaviour change/education programme

Some schools even decide to become ‘water only’ schools and work towards their gold Healthy Schools London award through this.

In order to maximise the return on investment and to further optimise child heath, it is important to provide behaviour change/education support, alongside the physical intervention (installation of water fountains). We have included a school toolkit in this pack with template letters to parents, along with further supporting information.

#

# School toolkit

## Top Tips & Frequently Asked Questions

**Top tips to support children to drink more water:**

* Have water readily available throughout the day by installing water fountains
* Send a letter to parents/carers to help them understand the change taking place
* Implement a ‘Water Only’ policy in your school
* Integrate water and hydration topics into your lessons and assemblies
* Employ/nominate a student as a water champion/water monitor to encourage peers to drink more water
* Model drinking water (by teachers in class and parents at home)
* Rebrand the water fountains or water fountain areas to make it fun
* Think about where you locate your new fountain/s to ensure maximum access – this may mean multiple locations. Don’t, for example, put them in the toilets.
* Consult with pupils to see where they would like them/use them.
* Externally located fountains may need some cover to minimise perceived contamination or heating from sun (children like their water cold!)

**Frequently asked questions:**

1. **If children start drinking more water in class, won’t they need the toilet more often and cause disruption to their lessons?**

In reality, this expectation is not met. For most, the bladder will soon adjust to cope with a larger intake. Some schools have found that the number of toilet visits decrease, as children no longer need to ask to go to the toilet as a means of gaining access to a drink. There is concern among health professionals that some children do not in fact go to the toilet enough at school.

1. **Some children don’t think drinking water from fountains is clean, what can I do to encourage them?**

Listen to your pupils to understand why they think this. Pupils from different backgrounds may still believe that you can’t drink tap water in the UK. You might want to address this topic in lessons or a school assembly, a letter to parents might also help. Water in this country is safe to drink, and there have been no cases of sickness or infection caused by drinking from fountains.

1. **Might water get spilt on tables in class?**

Schools could provide, or encourage parents to provide personal bottles with an appropriate closure system for students to drink out of. A spilled bottle of water is much easier to clean up than a sugary drink!

1. **Some children are bringing in sugary drinks from home, what can I do?**

Think about implementing a ‘water only policy’ in your school.

Transparent bottles will minimise this risk and regular spot checks can be made. Involving pupils and their parents from the outset and regularly promoting the benefits of drinking water will help this. You could send a letter to parents explaining the changes and importance of drinking more water, and less sugary drinks – a template is included in this pack.

1. **Aren’t water bottles or fountains unhygienic?**

Bottles should be washed regularly in warm, soapy water and left to air dry upside down. Children should also be encouraged to wash their hands regularly to minimise contamination. There have been no widely reported cases of illnesses being picked up from drinking fountains, but the negative health impact of sugary drinks and [disposable plastic bottles](https://www.sustainweb.org/news/mar18_microplastics_who/) is now well documented.

1. **How vandal proof are drinking fountains?**

How vandal proof is anything! There are ways to reduce the risk of vandalism – get the school community involved in its introduction – where it’s positioned, etc. rather than doing ‘to’ the school community. This way they’re more likely to embrace it and care for it. Where they’re positioned is also vital - well frequented places e.g. by playgrounds for getting a natural security.

1. **What’s the rough cost of installation?**

The costs quoted on fountains can vary hugely from £500 – to £10,000! This usually varies depending on the model and setting, and whether the installation is waived.

1. **How many water fountains are needed for a school**

There isn’t a recommended number of water fountains per school. Schools should consider the ratio of pupils to water fountains, their school layout and the demand at busy times of day (e.g at break times).

## Helpful resources and related programmes

* **Healthy Schools London**

Healthy Schools London is an award scheme sponsored by the Mayor of London which recognises and celebrates schools that are making a difference for their pupils. There are 3 award tiers; bronze, silver and gold. Installing a water fountain in your school will help you towards achieving a Healthy Schools award.

You can find out more here: [www.healthyschools.london.gov.uk](http://www.healthyschools.london.gov.uk)

* **Sugar Smart**

Sugar Smart is a campaign championed by Jamie Oliver and Sustain – it works with local authorities, food groups and food outlets from schools, to hospitals, workplaces, universities and restaurants.

As a school you can sign up to pledge action and be part of a national effort to reduce sugar consumption.

You can find out more here: [www.sugarsmartuk.org](http://www.sugarsmartuk.org)

* **Change for Life**

The Change for Life campaign provides some great resources and tips on how to encourage children (and adults!) to drink more water and some ideas for healthy alternatives to sugary drinks.

You can see more here: [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

* **Thames Water education programme**

Thames Water has produced a video with GB Rower and Olympic Gold Medallist – Andy Triggs Hodge which explains why drinking water is so important. This could be incorporated into a school assembly or a lesson plan.

You can find the video here: <https://corporate.thameswater.co.uk/About-us/Community/Tools-for-schools/Primary-schools/Key-stage-2-resources>

## Template letter for parents – supporting water fountains

Dear parent/guardian/caregiver,

Our school thinks that it is important for students to eat and drink healthily. Children who keep hydrated in and out of school can concentrate better and learn better. Therefore our school is installing a brand new water fountain.

We have decided to do this because we are aware that most children do not drink enough water and we are keen to reduce the environmental damage caused by plastic waste. We will be encouraging children to drink more water and to drink fewer sugary drinks like juice and fizzy drinks.

Water is a great choice throughout the day as it hydrates without providing additional calories or risking harm to teeth.

Please help us improve student health, learning and behaviour by supporting our work. When you are able to please:

- Have a water bottle available for your child to take to school

- Fill drink bottles with plain tap water

- Be a positive role model and continue to drink water at home

We appreciate your help with supporting our new water fountain and vision for children to drink more water.

Kind regards,

<Head teacher>

<School name>

## Template letter for parents – supporting water only schools

Dear parent/guardian/caregiver,

Our school thinks that it is important for students to eat and drink healthily. Children who keep hydrated in and out of school can concentrate better and learn better. Therefore our school has pledged to be a ‘Water only School’.

We have made this pledge because we are aware that schools who have adopted a water only policy, have seen pupil health, behaviour and learning improve. Children who have too much sugar in their diet have an increased chance of experiencing tooth decay, obesity and diabetes.

Water is a great choice throughout the day as it hydrates without providing additional calories or risking harm to teeth.

Please help us improve student health, learning and behaviour by supporting our work. When you are able to please:

- Have a water bottle available for your child to take to school

- Fill drink bottles with plain tap water

- Be a positive role model and continue to drink water at home

We appreciate your help with supporting our new policy and vision for children to drink more water.

Kind regards,

<Head teacher>

<School name>

1. NCMP data – 2016/17 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NDNS data – 2014/15-2015/16 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Oral Health Survey 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Natural Hydration Council – Teenage Hydration Habits 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Natural Hydration Council – Teenage Hydration Habits 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)