



# TOOLKIT

INCREASING WATER ACCESS &  
PROMOTION IN VIRGINIA SCHOOLS



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SECTION 1 | REV YOUR BEV

About the Rev Your Bev Campaign	3
Purpose of the Toolkit	4

## SECTION 2 | PROMOTING HEALTHY HYDRATION IN SCHOOLS

The Benefits of Increasing Water Promotion & Access in Schools	5
Creating a Supportive School Environment	5
Best Practices for Promoting Healthy Hydration	8

## SECTION 3 | MAKING WATER THE #1 BEVERAGE OF CHOICE

Actively Promoting Water	9
Free Resources	12
Rev Your Bev Day	13
Role Modeling Healthy Behaviors	14
Updating Schools' Wellness Policies	15
Rev Your Bev Model Policy	16

## SECTION 4 | SCHOOL RESOURCES

Sample School Announcements	19
Sample Parent Letter	20
Sample Staff Memo	21
Sample Social Media Messages	22

## SECTION 5 | SCHOOL DIVISION RESOURCES

Sample Staff Memo	24
Sample Newsletter Entry	25
Sample Press Release	26
Sample Social Media Messages	27

## SECTION 6 | FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Commonly Asked Questions and Ways to Respond	28
About the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth & Y Street	30
Sources & More Information	31



## ABOUT THE REV YOUR BEV CAMPAIGN

**The Rev Your Bev campaign** is excited to present the Rev Your Bev Toolkit that consists of a variety of tools and resources to encourage students to choose water!

Rev Your Bev is an obesity prevention initiative of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), supported by VFHY's statewide youth-led program, Y Street. The campaign is aimed at both promoting water as the number one drink of choice and helping schools across Virginia increase students' and staff's access to water.

Water acts as fuel to help your body carry out the functions that help you to learn, grow, and be physically active.<sup>1</sup> When students drink more water, they are healthier and focused, which in turn has a positive impact on their overall health and academic success. Since kids spend the majority of their time in school during the traditional school year, schools have much to gain by promoting water and access.

## PURPOSE OF THE TOOLKIT

The Rev Your Bev Toolkit is intended to assist schools with creating a supportive environment that gets students excited about water and committed to healthy hydration. This includes actively promoting water, asking staff to role model healthy behaviors, and updating school wellness policies with comprehensive standard language on water promotion and access.

This Toolkit provides materials and best practices to engage students, teachers, and staff around these efforts and communicate effectively—all of which help cultivate a healthier school environment.

### In this Toolkit you will find:

- Model Policy Language
- Best Practices Checklist
- Communication Tools such as sample letters and school announcements
- Recommendations for Success

## WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

### The Toolkit should be used by:

- School nutrition staff and administrators at the school and division-level who are interested in increasing water promotion and access in schools;
- School principals, teachers, and school staff; and,
- State and local stakeholders who can support the implementation of these efforts in schools across Virginia.

## WATER CONSUMPTION IN VIRGINIA SCHOOLS



During the 2019-2020 school year, Y Street's youth members collected surveys at their schools to assess students' and staff beverage preferences and water consumption during the day.



### OVERALL, THE RESULTS FOUND:

Water was reported as the most popular beverage, as **63%** of all respondents

said they **almost always or often drink water** during the school day.

**38%** of students and staff responded that the school promotes water by allowing students to **bring water from home.**



**37%** of students and staff identify that increased **access to water-sources in school** makes drinking water easier during the school day.

To read the full campaign survey findings report, visit **[revyourbev.com](https://revyourbev.com)**.



## SECTION 2

# PROMOTING HEALTHY HYDRATION IN SCHOOLS

### THE BENEFITS OF INCREASING WATER PROMOTION & ACCESS IN SCHOOLS

Water is an essential nutrient for life. Because children and adolescents spend so much time at school, having access to safe and appealing drinking water is critical for the adoption of healthy, sustainable drinking habits. When children and adolescents do not have enough water to drink, their health and their cognitive performance, particularly short-term memory, may suffer.<sup>2</sup> And when water is not available, children and adolescents tend to consume more sugary sweetened beverages, which research has shown is linked to obesity and obesity-related illnesses such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.<sup>3</sup>

***Water is important because it is an essential element in our body that contributes to a healthier lifestyle.***

Riya A., Fauquier HS (Warrenton, VA)

More than half of all children and adolescents in the U.S. are not getting enough hydration.<sup>4</sup> Consumption of water, especially in place of sugary drinks, can help children and adolescents:

Stay hydrated, focused, and ready to learn.

Improve cognitive function.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Prevent dental cavities.

### CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

With more than 95% of children and adolescents enrolled in schools, spending at least 6 hours at school each day, schools are in a unique position to promote healthy behaviors, including drinking water.<sup>5</sup> When schools provide drinking water, they promote the overall health and development of children and adolescents. Ensuring that students have access to safe, free drinking water throughout the school gives them a healthy alternative to sugary-sweetened beverages before, during, and after school.<sup>6</sup>

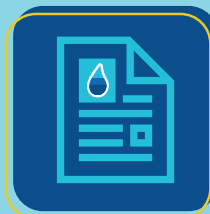
# WHAT DOES A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?



Free water is made available throughout the school day, including during physical activity and after-school.



Water promotion posters are visible near water fountains, bottle-filling stations, and other water sources.



Messages about the benefits of water are included and promoted in school communication materials.



Students and staff are engaged in fun and educational water activities.



Staff, teachers, and administrators model healthy hydration.

# CHARLOTTESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL INVESTS IN WATER TO INVEST IN THEIR STUDENT'S WELLNESS

On February 6, 2020, Charlottesville High School in Charlottesville, VA, celebrated their new fruit-infused water dispensers and the healthy message they deliver.

***The idea of my peers being able to access water that tastes good and is easily accessible is exciting! I can't wait to see everyone drinking their fruit-infused water around the school and in class.***

Abigail T, Charlottesville HS (Charlottesville, VA)



Charlottesville's School Principal, Dr. Irizarry, commits to setting up water dispensers in the cafeteria.



Charlottesville HS unveils its new Hydration Station.

# REV YOUR BEV COMPREHENSIVE STANDARD CHECKLIST

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth has set forth comprehensive standards for how schools and school divisions can provide drinking water access and promote water consumption among students and staff. Below is a checklist that outlines best practices for schools interested in supporting water access and promoting water consumption.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY HYDRATION

School division leadership and administrators:

- ☐ Recognize water as an essential nutrient.
- ☐ Encourage staff, teachers, and administrators to model healthy behavior.
- ☐ State that the school division will provide all students, teachers, and staff with easy access to clean, safe, and good-tasting drinking water free of charge.
- ☐ Require that free water will be available throughout the school day, after-school, and during physical activity including:
  - ☐ Where meals are served, high traffic and common areas, gyms, outdoor physical activity spaces, and faculty lounges; and,
  - ☐ Making water sources, containers, and cups available if water fountains are not present.
- ☐ Maintain water sources and containers regularly to ensure there is no obstruction or debris.
- ☐ Allow students to bring water bottles, filled with water, to use.
- ☐ Specify a communication plan to inform the school community of the wellness policy.
- ☐ Appoint key personnel to oversee and support such procedures in all schools in the division.
- ☐ Require signs promoting water consumption be placed in strategic locations.



## SECTION 3

# MAKING WATER THE #1 BEVERAGE OF CHOICE

## ACTIVELY PROMOTING WATER AS A PRIMARY HYDRATION OPTION

With so many proven benefits, water should be an important part of every student's day, both at home and at school. Thus, parents, administrators, staff, and teachers should work together to facilitate and encourage water consumption among youth.

Let's look at suggestions and strategies for promoting water in schools:

### 1. POST WATER PROMOTION POSTERS

Promoting water in schools can start with placing water promotion posters near water fountains, bottle-filling stations, and other water sources to reinforce healthy behaviors. Displaying water promotion posters helps increase students' awareness of where the water sources are and of the benefits of drinking water.



All posters 18.25" x 24.25"

## 2. SET UP INFUSED WATER DISPENSERS

Set up fruit-infused water dispensers in the school cafeteria, classrooms, or another designated area where most appropriate. This would not only allow students to get more from their water but provide another convenient option for them to make healthier beverage choices.



### 3. IMPLEMENT WATER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Schools can also encourage teachers and staff to facilitate interactive water education activities for students to learn more about the benefits of healthy hydration. Incorporating activities adds a social component that can make learning best practices more fun and meaningful for students. Ask students to co-facilitate, as this will help reinforce their own learning by instructing their peers.



***It is important to educate my school community about the importance of drinking water because water is necessary part of our life and we don't drink enough. Educating my peers will help them lead healthier lives.***

Jordyn R., Caroline HS (Hanover, VA)

#### EXAMPLES:

##### WATER DRINKING COMPETITION

Encourage students, teachers, and staff to log their water intake throughout the week. Incentivize participants with a reward for logging the most cups/ounces.

##### TASTE TEST

Create different fruit-infused recipes using a combination of fruits (ex: strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, lemon, and lime), herbs (ex: mint), and veggies (cucumber) that students and staff can sample. Have them vote on their favorite recipe to increase school involvement in creating a healthier environment. Visit [revyourbev.com](http://revyourbev.com) for recipe ideas.

##### WATER BOTTLE DECORATING

If you are able to, provide students with water bottles. Let them decorate the bottles and really make it their own. You can provide them with fun supplies such as markers, colored tape, stickers, rhinestones, etc. If you have a policy mandating clear water bottles, limit the design space so that the contents of the bottle can still be seen.

##### SIP BREAKS

Schedule out breaks during in-person and virtual class time and encourage students to drink water. You can also utilize this time to share the benefits of drinking water.

Additionally, school divisions and schools can:

## DIVISION-LEVEL

- Post the Rev Your Bev Best Practices checklist and Role Modeling Guide on the division's Website (see page 14 for Guide).
- Partner with the Rev Your Bev campaign to demonstrate statewide interest and support of creating school environments that promote healthy hydration in Virginia schools.

***Celebrating water is important because water is extremely beneficial or our bodies. With the gift of water, I am able to play sports! Be proactive! And enjoy a healthy life.***

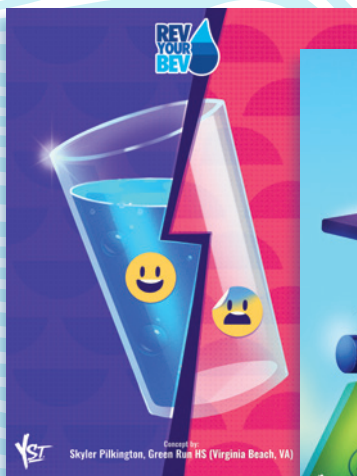
Oma A., King George HS (King George, VA)

## SCHOOL-LEVEL

- Post the Rev Your Bev Best Practices checklist and Role Modeling guide on your school's online virtual platforms and in staff and teacher lounges.
- Provide praise or positive reinforcement when students drink water. The more students are recognized and praised for their efforts, the more motivated they are to continue with healthy behaviors.

## FREE RESOURCES

The Rev Your Bev campaign understands how important water is and thus is committed to providing a range of free resources to assist schools with creating environments that promote healthy hydration. **Rev Your Bev offers water promotion posters, fruit-infused water dispensers, and cups or water bottles to school divisions who partner with the campaign.** To request resources, please contact [info@revyourbev.com](mailto:info@revyourbev.com).



18.25" x 24.25"



18.25" x 24.25"



# REV YOUR BEV DAY

Rev Your Bev Day is the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's annual statewide **Day of Action** to raise awareness about the benefits of making water your number one beverage of choice. Rev Your Bev brings schools, youth, educators, and health advocates across the commonwealth together to change the way Virginians think about water.

For the 9th annual Rev Your Bev Day on November 13, 2020, Y Street's youth leaders joined Rev Your Bev and VFHY in spreading the message that drinking more water is a healthy decision. Youth leaders shared videos on social media showcasing their favorite fruit-infused water recipes and fun healthy messages about the benefits of drinking water.

To learn more about Rev Your Bev Day, visit [revyourbev.com](https://revyourbev.com).



# ROLE MODELING HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

Staff and teachers play a vital role in helping students foster healthy habits by setting an example and providing motivation and encouragement. Youth are more likely to choose water and adopt healthy behaviors if their teachers, staff, and other administrators they look up to are doing the same.

Staff and teachers can model healthy hydration by:<sup>7</sup>



**Drinking water in front of students to promote healthy beverage choices and support the school's message.**

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**Refraining from drinking sugar sweetened beverages in front of students.**

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**Drinking water from dispensers and other water sources around the school to help dispel misconceptions of drinking tap water.**

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**Use reusable water bottles and encourage students to do the same to influence students to drink water consistently throughout the day.**

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**Host and participate in fruit-infused water tasting activities where students can learn how to create their own water recipes using their favorite fruits and herbs. Visit [www.revyourbev.com](http://www.revyourbev.com) for great recipes!**

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**Facilitate and participate in fun educational water activities with students to raise awareness on the health benefits of drinking water.**

# UPDATING SCHOOLS' WELLNESS POLICY

Water is so important that all schools participating in the federally-funded National School Lunch Program are now required by law to make free drinking water available to all students during meal times, wherever those meals are served.<sup>8</sup> However, research shows that many students are still not meeting daily recommendations for water consumption.

Updating the School Wellness Policy offers an opportunity for divisions to prioritize water promotion and access in schools to energize efforts to increase students' water consumption. Schools should take a look at their wellness policy and consider whether it could stand to have provisions added or language updated to make it more comprehensive. The Rev Your Bev campaign is positioned to assist school divisions statewide with updating their School Wellness Policy by providing comprehensive language and hands-on support to move the policy language from paper to action.

## ROADMAP TO UPDATING THE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

### STEP 1: REVIEW REV YOUR BEV'S MODEL POLICY

- Invite Rev Your Bev and Y Street youth leaders to school and administrative meetings to review the campaign's model policy and answer any specific questions you may have about the language, as well as discuss the process the division follows for policy updates (see page 16 for model policy).
- Rev Your Bev will work with school divisions to help you navigate the process of updating your School Wellness Policy.

### STEP 2: PLAN THE IMPLEMENTATION

- Appoint a member of key personnel to oversee implementation of the updated policy, such as a school wellness coordinator, school nurse, counselor, health/fitness coach, etc.
- With support from Rev Your Bev, determine the resources (i.e., dispensers, water bottles, etc.) needed for effective implementation.

### STEP 3: COMMUNICATE THE UPDATED POLICY

- Notify and inform students, parents, teachers, and staff about the updated policy. Include the policy in the Student & Employee Handbook (if applicable).
- Make headlines! Publicize your efforts on the division's website and social channels to promote and inform the public about the reasons for the changes. Let them know that your division is creating these school environments to motivate students to drink more water and boost their overall health and performance. Rev Your Bev offers free promotion and advertising to help recognize and celebrate your efforts (see page 26 for public relations material).

# REV YOUR BEV MODEL POLICY

## PREAMBLE

The \_\_\_\_\_ City/County School Board recognizes that water is an essential nutrient, and drinking water has been shown to improve students' readiness to learn by increasing hydration and cognitive function.

Providing students with access to drinking water can increase their water consumption and give them a healthy alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages during the school day.<sup>7</sup>

School administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and visitors serve as role models for students and can have a positive influence on the health of students. The \_\_\_\_\_ City/County School Board recognizes it has an obligation to promote positive role-modeling in schools and promote a healthy learning and working environment.

The \_\_\_\_\_ City/County School Board is committed to increasing school administrators, teachers, staff, and students' access to water during school hours and at before- and after-school activities to create healthy school environments and improve students' health and wellness overall.

## WATER ACCESS AND PROMOTION

The school division shall provide all students (including those with disabilities), teachers, and staff with easy, age-appropriate access to clean, safe drinking water free of charge at every school campus throughout the school day and before and after school activities.

The school division will actively promote free, safe, potable drinking water at every school campus throughout the school day, during before and after-school activities at the following locations: where meals are served, high traffic and common areas, gyms, outdoor physical activity spaces, and faculty lounges.

Water sources, containers, and cups will be made available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present. All water sources and containers are maintained regularly and meet established hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water containers, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled exclusively with water throughout the day, including in the cafeteria during mealtimes. Students are allowed to take their reusable water bottles into the classroom except into the library, computer or science labs. *Misuse of bottles will be subject to disciplinary action.*

# REV YOUR BEV MODEL POLICY (CONT.)

## COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The school administration will develop a communication plan to promote and inform teachers, staff, parents, and students about the policy, including information in student and employee handbooks, making the policy accessible on the school website, periodic announcements during the school day, and sending a memo to school staff.

The school division will post water promotion posters in school buildings and on school property in visible, prominent locations to promote and support schools' messaging on healthy hydration.

The school division will ask and encourage school administrators, teachers, and staff to drink water around students to model healthy behaviors.

Each school division will be responsible for appointing a member of key personnel to oversee implementation of the policy, such as a school wellness coordinator, school nurse, counselor, health/fitness coach, etc.

*Through the implementation and communication of this policy, the school district will create an environment that supports opportunities for improving water access and water consumption.*



## SECTION 4

# SCHOOL RESOURCES

# SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT TEMPLATE

Regular school announcements are a simple effective strategy to enhance communication and spread messaging and news about your school's water activities. It also fosters and promotes a sense of unity, increasing your students' and staff's interest and involvement in creating a healthier school community.

The following are sample school announcements you can modify and use during morning or weekly announcements.<sup>9</sup> We recommend multiple announcements throughout the school year.

## EXAMPLE SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Hi **[School Name]** family! We are excited to announce that we have teamed up with Rev Your Bev, an obesity prevention initiative of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, to incorporate more healthy habits into our daily activities by increasing students' and staff's access to water.
- Hi **[School Name]**. Good news – drinking water has just gotten even easier! We are proud to share that we have updated our local School Wellness Policy that now allows you to carry a reusable water bottle to sip water consistently throughout the day. Your body needs water to function. Let's continue to work together to help make water everyone's number one beverage of choice. To learn more about the policy, visit our school website at **[School Website]**.
- Good morning **[School Name]**! Like food, water acts as fuel in your body and helps your body function. This is why we are committed to making free water available during the day so you can fuel your body with water throughout the school day.
- Hi **[School Name]** family! Guess what, we have set up new fruit-infused water dispensers at **[location]**. Stop by the dispenser throughout the day and fill your cup or reusable water bottles with fresh water. Join us in our commitment to maintaining a healthy school environment, as positive change is more likely to occur when everyone takes action!
- Getting our school community excited about drinking water is one of **[School Name]** priorities. There are so many good things that come from drinking water. In addition to boosting your academic performance, it can help you maintain a healthy weight and avoid dental cavities, as well as keep your skin clear and healthy.
- Good morning **[School Name]**. Whether you're playing hard or studying around the clock be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day!
- Good morning **[School Name]**! Start your morning with a cup or bottle of water and keep sipping throughout the day to keep your energy up and feel your best.
- Hi **[School Name]**! What you drink is just as important as what you eat. When it comes to healthy drink choices, water is a clear choice!

# SAMPLE PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER

Dear Parent/Guardian,

[School Name] is pleased to announce that our school has decided to place an emphasis on helping students drink more water during the school day by updating our local School Wellness Policy with comprehensive language that increases water access and promotion. A copy of the updated policy is attached.

We updated the School Wellness Policy on [Insert Date] because we recognize the benefits of drinking water:

- Boosts academic performance
- Energizes muscles
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Improve oral health

We believe that schools are a place where students develop behaviors that will last a lifetime and thus are committed to maintaining a supportive environment that provides positive role modeling for students. With the assistance of our teachers and staff, our goal is to get students excited about drinking water and adopting healthy habits. Just like brushing their teeth and eating meals throughout the day, we want to teach them to make healthy hydration a part of everyday life.

As part of our effort, we have placed water promotion posters around the school for positive reinforcement. We also plan to engage students in educational water activities to teach them the benefits of drinking water and make regular announcements to motivate and encourage students to drink water.

Join [School Name] and take part in the action! You play a role in our school community efforts as well by helping to foster your child's/children's habits at home. With your encouragement and motivation, your child/children will feel more confident and empowered in participating in and sustaining a healthy lifestyle in and outside of school.

We are excited about our updated School Wellness Policy and the continued healthy environment it provides our students. We appreciate your help in supporting the policy and our efforts to get students to drink more water.

If you have questions or comments about the policy, please contact [Name of Appointed Personnel] at (     ) -     -     .

Sincerely,

[School Principal Name]

# SAMPLE STAFF/MEMO EMAIL

Dear Staff,

[School Name] is pleased to announce that our school has decided to place an emphasis on helping students drink more water during the school day by updating our local School Wellness Policy with comprehensive language that increases water access and promotion. A copy of the updated policy is attached.

We updated the School Wellness Policy on [Insert Date] because we recognize the benefits of drinking water:

- Boosts academic performance
- Energizes muscles
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Improve oral health

Our school values the health and well-being of all students and staff. For this reason, we have updated the School Wellness Policy to ensure we maintain a positive, healthy learning environment that embraces healthy hydration and encourages students and staff to put it into practice.

As a staff, it is critical that we work together to make this a permanent part of our school's culture. This includes recognizing our position as positive role models for students, as [School Name] is a place where youth develop behaviors that will last a lifetime. A Guide for Role Modeling Healthy Behaviors is also attached.

As part of our school's effort, we have placed water promotion posters around the school for positive reinforcement. We also ask teachers to engage students in educational water activities to teach them the benefits of drinking water and for staff to make regular announcements to motivate and encourage students to choose water. Parents and guardians will be notified about our efforts and updated policy to encourage their support and involvement.

We are utilizing the Rev Your Bev campaign's Toolkit, an obesity prevention initiative of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, which includes information such as a Best Practices checklist, suggested activities, and communications materials to help with implementation. To access the Toolkit, visit [revyourbev.com](http://revyourbev.com).

We are excited about our updated School Wellness Policy and the continued healthy environment it provides our students. We appreciate your help in supporting the policy and our efforts to get students to drink more water.

If you have questions or comments about the policy, please contact [Appointed Personnel Name] at ( ) - - .

Sincerely,

[School Principal Name]



# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES

Highlight your school's efforts on social media to inform the public about the great things your school is doing to get students excited about drinking water.

The following are sample posts you can modify and use:

**[School Name]** is continuing to make student health and wellness a top priority! With great leadership from **[School Division Name]**, we recently made changes to our School Wellness Policy to increase students and staff access to water. To view the policy, visit **[School's Website]**



We commend parents', teachers' and staff's efforts to help our students stay hydrated and healthy, and perform at their best! @revyourbev



Infusing water with fresh fruit, vegetables, or herbs is an easy way to make drinking water 2x as fun, without adding calories. Check out the fun recipes **[School Name]** has created thus far with our new dispensers! @revyourbev

**[School Name]** is empowering our students to make it a habit to drink water throughout the day. @revyourbev

Did you know? Water is the healthiest beverage choice. It has zero calories and no sugar! @revyourbev



By teaching our students the benefits of choosing water, we're instilling healthy behaviors that will help them lead longer, healthier, and happier lives. @revyourbev



Our students here at **[School Name]** are boosting their energy and brain power by drinking more water during the day! @revyourbev

We love to celebrate water! Celebrations provide a perfect opportunity to show how fun and water go hand-in-hand! @revyourbev

Thanks to the updates made to our School Wellness Policy, students are allowed to carry reusable water bottles to practice healthy hydration throughout the day! @revyourbev



Drinking tap water saves energy & the environment because no plastic bottles end up in landfills or oceans. @revyourbev



Water has everything our students and staff need to refuel, reenergize, and rehydrate! @revyourbev



## SECTION 5

# SCHOOL DIVISION RESOURCES

# SAMPLE STAFF MEMO/EMAIL

To All School Staff:

We are excited to announce that **[School Division Name]** has updated its School Wellness Policy on **[Date]** to include comprehensive language that:

- Recognizes water as an essential nutrient.
- Encourages staff, teachers, and administrators to model healthy behavior.
- Provides all students, teachers, and staff with easy access to clean, safe, and good-tasting drinking water.
- Makes free water available throughout the school day.
- Maintains water sources and containers regularly to ensure there is no obstruction or debris.
- Allows students to carry water bottles, filled with water.
- Promotes water consumption with signage.

A copy of the updated policy is attached.

**[School Division Name]** values the health and well-being of all students, teachers, and staff. When students drink more water, they are healthier and focused. Water acts as fuel to help your body carry out the functions that help students to learn, grow, and be physically active. Drinking more water has been shown to help keep students focused and ready to learn.

The comprehensive language in the School Wellness Policy is a very positive and exciting step toward increasing water consumption in our schools. Now that the policy has been updated, we need everyone's help with implementing it as maintaining a positive and healthy learning environment is a collective effort, involving everyone in our school community.

We will utilize the Rev Your Bev campaign's Toolkit, an obesity prevention initiative of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, which includes information such as a Best Practices checklist, suggested activities, and communications materials to help with implementation. To access the Toolkit, visit [revyourbev.com](http://revyourbev.com).

We appreciate your help in supporting the policy and our efforts to get our school community to drink more water. To learn more about our School Division's updated School Wellness Policy, please visit **[School Division Website]**.

Sincerely,

**[School Administrator]**

# SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ENTRY

**Headline:** Drinking Water Just Became Easier! **[School Division Name]**!

**[School Division Name]** is excited to share that we have made amazing strides in getting our school community excited about water.

As part of our efforts, we have:

1. Updated the School Wellness Policy to align with the Rev Your Bev campaign best practices, an obesity initiative by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, to increase students' and staff's access to free water such as allowing students to carry a reusable water bottle throughout the day.
2. Set up fruit-infused water dispensers to help make the decision to choose water easier.
3. Engaged students in fun educational water activities.

We believe that all students deserve an opportunity to be healthy and successful. Drinking water can improve students' overall health and academic performance, helping our school community stay healthy, productive, and energetic!

Together, we can create a healthier school environment for our students to learn and grow with water.

To access and review the policy, visit **[School Website]**.

**[Insert photos showcasing your school's efforts]**

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

FOR RELEASE ON  
[Insert Date/Time (PST/EST)]

Contact: [Name and Organization]  
Phone Number:  
Email Address:

## **[School Division Name] Partners with the Rev Your Bev Campaign to Encourage Students, Teachers, and Staff to Drink More Water**

[CITY NAME], VA – [School Division Name] has partnered with the Rev Your Bev campaign to motivate their school community to drink more water and recognize the health benefits of making this choice. [School Division Name] has [set up water dispensers/provided water bottles or cups], and provided information on the school’s website [INSERT Link] and social media pages to promote healthy hydration.

The Rev Your Bev campaign is an obesity prevention initiative of the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), which is supported by VFHY’s statewide youth-led program, Y Street. The campaign is partnering with school divisions across the commonwealth to assist divisions with updating their School Wellness Policy with comprehensive language that increases students’ and staff’s access to water and providing free resources to assist with implementation. One of the reasons for this initiative is because research shows that adolescents’ consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages can lead to obesity and obesity-related illnesses such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease [Source - footnote at the end of release].

“We are excited to partner with Rev Your Bev to improve the overall health and wellness of our school environment,” said **XX, XX Title with XX School Division Name**. “Since updating the School Wellness Policy, we have seen how our students have benefited academically, emotionally, and physically, and we believe it’s largely due to implementing best practices and sharing messaging on why drinking more water can make a difference in our daily lives.”

The school division is utilizing the campaign’s resources such as the Rev Your Bev Toolkit [INSERT Link], which includes information and suggested activities to promote water in schools.

To learn more about the school division’s efforts and to review the policy, Visit [School Website].

###

# SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Highlight your school division's efforts on social media to inform the public about the great work your division is doing to get students excited about drinking water.

The following are sample posts you can modify and use:

**[School Division Name]** continues to make student health and wellness a top priority! With support from @revyourbev, we've made updates to our School Wellness Policy that increases students and staff access to water. To view the policy, visit **[School Division website]**.

100

Thanks to our newly updated School Wellness Policy, which makes accessing water easier at school, big healthy changes are happening for our students, teachers, and staff! @revyourbev



It's important that we continue to support students' health behaviors even during distance learning. We encourage families to drink water together while at home! @revyourbev

Teamwork makes the dream work! Staff, teachers, and students in **[School Division Name]** are all working together to make water the number one beverage of choice in school. @revyourbev

Using the Rev Your Bev Standard Checklist, we are engaging students, teachers, and staff in best practices to turn drinking water into a habit! @revyourbev



With support from Rev Your Bev, **[School Division Name]** is setting up fruit-infused water dispensers in schools to send a healthy message to our school community to @revyourbev



Our goal is to encourage students to drink water by visiting water fountains, bottle-filling stations, and other water sources during the day, and allowing students to carry clear water bottles in class. @revyourbev

**[School Division Name]** When students drink water throughout the day, it can help them stay alert, energized, and refreshed! @revyourbev

Schools play a huge role in fostering students' health behaviors! What we do has an impact on how they develop healthy habits. @revyourbev



Updating our School Wellness Policy to increase our school community access to water supports lifelong healthy lifestyles and helps reduce the risk of obesity. @revyourbev



**[School Division Name]** We want our school community to be the healthiest it can be! @revyourbev



## SECTION 6

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### HOW WILL THE PROMOTION OF WATER IMPACT STUDENT'S CONSUMPTION OF MILK?

Research has shown that milk consumption is not significantly decreased when drinking water is made available to students in the cafeteria. Water is not a replacement for milk at meals, but rather an additional beverage that is available to students.

### WILL PROVIDING CUPS AT WATER ACCESS POINTS INCREASE LITTERING AROUND THE SCHOOL?

Providing cups at water access points has been shown to increase the amount of water that students consume. Concerns that students will not properly dispose of the cups after they drink from them is a valid concern. One strategy that you could implement to prevent littering is to ensure that trash or recycling receptacles are available near all water access points. In addition, policies and practices that encourage students to bring their own water bottles to school could help reduce the need for disposable cups.

### HOW DO WE ADDRESS CONCERNS THAT THE TAP WATER IS NOT SAFE TO DRINK?

Most tap water in the United States is assured by the United States Environmental Protection Agency standards and regulations to be clean and safe for drinking. There are instances, however, when tap water may not be safe to drink because of unsafe plumbing systems of contaminated water sources. It is important to have drinking water tested so that water quality issues are addressed when they exist. One strategy that schools could adopt is to encourage teachers and staff to drink the tap water in front of students in order to role model the behavior.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT.)

## WHAT IF STUDENTS DO NOT LIKE THE TASTE OF THE LOCAL TAP WATER?

It's important to understand why students may not like the taste of the local tap water. Often time, filtering water and chilling the water are two strategies that may improve the taste. Schools could also consider offering fruit infused water as an alternative. For additional information on fruit infused water recipes, visit [revyourbev.com](http://revyourbev.com).

## WON'T MORE CLASSROOM DISRUPTIONS OCCUR BECAUSE OF WATER SPILLS?

A great strategy for avoiding spills is to require all water bottles to be capped when in the classroom or to keep water bottles on the floor when not in use to prevent water from spilling on desks.

## WHAT IF STUDENTS MISUSE THE REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES?

Schools concerned about the contents of the reusable water bottle can require students to use clear (i.e., see-through) reusable bottles.



# ABOUT THE VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH & Y STREET

## VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1999, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth empowers teens throughout Virginia to make healthy choices by promoting active, nutritious, tobacco-free living. Since VFHY began its work in 2001, high school smoking in Virginia has been cut by more than 60 percent and the number of middle school smokers has dropped by more than 75 percent.

The Foundation directly reaches about 50,000 children each year through classroom-based prevention programs in public schools, after-school programs, community centers, daycares, and other prevention programs across the state. VFHY's award-winning marketing campaigns deliver prevention messaging to more than 500,000 children annually. For more information, visit [www.vfhy.org](http://www.vfhy.org).



## Y STREET



Founded in 2004, Y Street is the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth's teen volunteer group for high school students. Y Street youth work on obesity, nutrition, and tobacco and nicotine-use prevention campaigns, such as Share The Air and Rev Your Bev, to help promote a healthier Virginia. Y Street members have worked on public health issues with top government officials, including the U.S. Surgeon General and Virginia's Governor, Attorney General, and First Lady. For more information, visit [www.ystreet.org](http://www.ystreet.org).

# SOURCES AND MORE INFORMATION

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