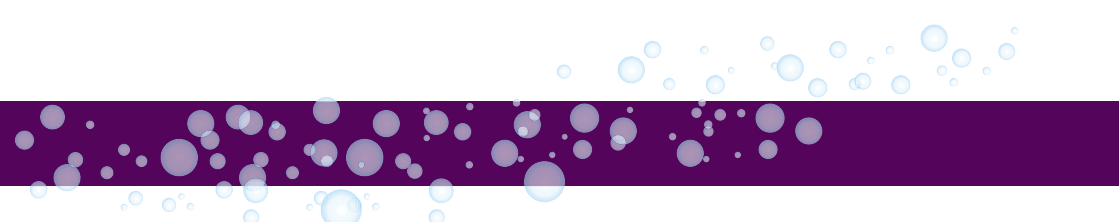
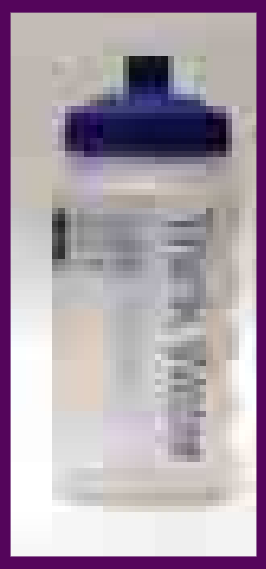


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- For younger pupils, you may wish to use a crate for storage of bottles in a central place in the classroom, and allow pupils frequent access to them. Pupils will then need to be reminded to drink the water, so regular drink breaks may be required.
 - On sports days and at special events, take the crates of bottles outside to encourage children to drink during activities.
 - Encourage children to drink extra water following exercise.
 - Launch the scheme by holding a special assembly; pupils could give a presentation on the importance of drinking water. You might wish to invite a sports personality, the school nurse or another health professional to raise the profile and add interest to the launch. Invite parents and governors to the launch.
 - Create a school policy involving staff, pupils, parents and governors and include it in the school brochure/prospectus.
 - Liaise with your local Healthy School Co-ordinator for advice and support.
 - Water bottles must be washed and refilled daily.
 - Advice on cleaning water bottles is included in this guidance for distribution to parents. Alternatively, the school might wish to take responsibility for keeping the bottles clean, in which case you should establish clear procedures on how to carry this out.
 - Encouraging teachers and support staff to drink water in class can be a good example to pupils.
 - Water is additional to other drinks at breaks (such as milk).
 - Some teachers might not be convinced about the benefits of having water available in class. Perhaps those who are convinced could run a pilot programme – and when it succeeds other teachers will also see the benefit, and join in.

Obtaining water bottles



To further improve access to fresh tap water Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is working with selected manufacturers and distributors to help give all schools in Wales easy access to high quality water bottles at a low cost.

Using its buying power Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has sourced a supply of water bottles that comply with these guidance notes, being:

- durable clear plastic bottles, specifically designed for drinking water;
- 'no spill' caps;
- easy to refill;
- easy to keep clean;
- easy to drink from.

For further details please visit: www.livingandlearningwithwater.com

These bottles can also be ordered from PHS Waterlogic on 01252 852650 quoting 'Welsh Water Sports Bottle'. Product code: 105210. (Please note – Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has no commercial involvement and makes no profit on these bottles).



Common concerns

Some schools are concerned that introducing water on desks will have a disruptive effect. Some common concerns are discussed below.

Children will misbehave

Pilot schools have reported few problems other than initial silliness by a minority, but this soon settles down.

Children will need to use the toilet more frequently

The bladder adjusts to an increased intake of water within a few weeks, therefore more frequent visits to the toilet happen only in the initial period.

Books and work will be spoiled due to spillages

It is important to use only purpose-made non-spill bottles. Schools that have used them report no problems. Also children quickly become accustomed to taking care. For younger children, bottles can be kept in crates at the side of the classroom.

Children will fiddle with bottles during lessons

Some children might fiddle with their bottles during lessons but they might be kinaesthetic learners who could actually benefit from fiddling with their bottles as they learn.

Bottles will become mixed up and cause a hygiene problem

Each child's bottle should be clearly marked with the child's name using a permanent marker and re-marked regularly to avoid confusion.

Bottles may be unhygienic

Bottles should be thoroughly washed daily in warm soapy water, rinsed, and left to air-dry upside down.

Children may put other drinks in their bottles

Transparent bottles will minimise this risk and regular spot checks can be made.

We are really supportive of the scheme and all staff feel it makes a difference to the children's concentration especially in the afternoons and summer months. The children do not abuse the system and we have had no problems.

- I can't concentrate when I'm hot but water helps me get it back.
- It keeps me going.
- I get hot and you need water to cool down.
- Everybody gets thirsty, don't they?

An excellent scheme. It encourages us all, pupils and staff alike, to drink water. The water is freely accessible all day and also well used by after-school sports clubs. The water is cool and refreshing and has proved to be of enormous benefit to our school, an altogether marvellous idea.

Information for parents

Few schoolchildren drink enough water. Schoolchildren need to drink at least six to eight glasses of fluids ($1\frac{1}{2}$ -2 litres) per day, ideally water, but also some milk. This should be taken regularly throughout the day (at least three to four glasses while at school). Plenty of additional fluid should be drunk in warm weather and/or when exercising.

Low fluid intake can lead to health problems and can also affect concentration, learning and behaviour.

The links between drinking more water and health

- Drinking water regularly throughout the day is an important way of protecting health and contributing to well-being.
- Having an adequate intake of water can help to prevent a range of short- and long-term health problems.
- Water is a healthier drink than still and fizzy soft-drinks which can be high in sugar, artificial sweeteners, additives and caffeine.

The links between drinking water and learning

- Mental performance is improved by the frequent intake of small amounts of water.
- When we are thirsty (the first conscious sign of dehydration) mental performance deteriorates by ten per cent.
- Pupils concentrate better because they are not distracted by feelings of dehydration – thirst, tiredness and irritability.
- Children achieve more when their health and learning needs are met.



Dehydration

If children do not drink enough water at school they can quickly become dehydrated. Dehydration means simply not having enough water in the body. Children's fluid requirements are proportionally higher than the requirements adults.

Simple day-to-day dehydration can cause a variety of symptoms including:

- thirst;
- headaches and stomach aches;
- fatigue;
- irritability;
- impaired concentration;
- impaired mental performance;
- impaired physical and sports performance.

Dehydration is also associated with the following health problems:

- constipation;
- urinary tract infections;
- bedwetting, daytime wetting and soiling problems;
- kidney problems, including kidney stones and disease;
- acute appendicitis;
- cardiovascular disease;
- some cancers.

How do you know if you are dehydrated?

Children (and adults) can be taught to recognise when their fluid intake is too low as their urine becomes concentrated (small amounts of dark yellow, cloudy, smelly urine). Drinking more water will encourage a healthy, odourless and plentiful flow of urine, no darker than the colour of pale straw. It will encourage children to go to the toilet regularly throughout the day.

Wetting or enuresis

There is a link between low fluid intake during the day and wetting incidents. If children do not drink adequately during the day, their urine becomes concentrated, which can irritate the bladder and may cause daytime wetting. An insufficient fluid intake during the day can also reduce their bladder capacity. If they then drink large quantities when they go home their bladder might not be able to cope and bedwetting could result. This affects one in 11 nine-year-olds in the UK. When children drink more water and their bladder capacity has improved they will need to go to the toilet less frequently but will produce larger quantities of urine.

Why choose water?

It is very important to drink only water during class. Keep any squash, fruit juice or fizzy drinks to mealtimes only (and ideally limit fizzy drinks to occasional drinks). Sweet and acidic drinks (including those that are sugar-free) are harmful to teeth. The more frequently they are drunk, the greater the harm to teeth. The consumption of high-sugar soft drinks can cause a rapid rise in blood sugar levels, followed by a dip, resulting in low levels of physical and mental energy. Some children could be sensitive to the additives, caffeine and sweeteners in soft drinks.

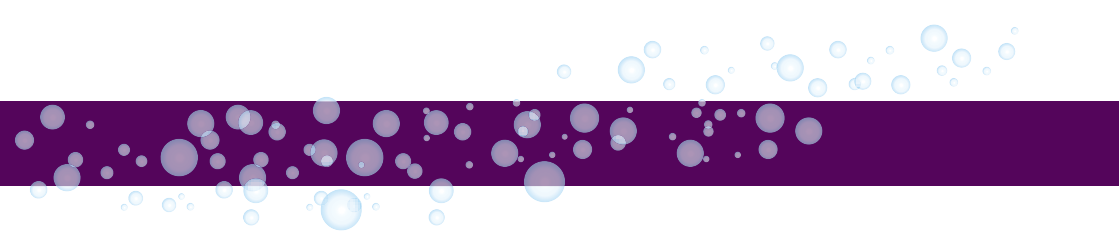
Care of bottles

If bottles are sent home to be cleaned, they should be washed in warm soapy water, the sports caps scrubbed with a brush, and the bottles left to air-dry upside down in a hygienic place; or they can be washed in a dishwasher if the bottles are suitable.

Parents' information, which can be freely copied, and much of the information regarding benefits of water and water bottle on desks is reproduced from the national *Water is Cool in School* campaign by kind permission of Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC) 34 Old School House, Britannia Road, Kingswood, Bristol BS15 8DB. Tel 0117 960 3060. Charity website www.eric.org.uk. Campaign website www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk.

ERIC is the childrens health charity (reg. charity number 1002424) that provides information and support on childhood wetting and soiling problems.





At first, because the children were young, we thought it would be difficult but it has been the simplest and most successful initiative we have implemented.

Bottles are filled twice a day and placed in crates in the classrooms; all children have access to the water at all times and are ready to work at all times.

The scheme gives independence especially to the little ones. We have had no problems and it really has not been an issue.

Sally Francis, Head Teacher, Mount Airey Infants School,
Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.

The older pupils certainly benefit — we have seen them in exams with bottles of water rather than cola.

It has encouraged them to think along a healthier option.

Further reading

1. Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, (2004) *Dietary Intakes for Water* Washington DC: The National Academies Press.
2. European Point of Use Drinking Water Association (EPDWA) (2005) *Guidelines for the Provision of Coolers in Schools* www.epdwa.org.

Other resources

Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (2000), *Water is Cool in School* www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk

Dŵr Cyrmu Welsh Water, *Living and Learning with Water* www.livingandlearningwithwater.com

