

## FSSAI proposes to restrict sale and promotion of unhealthy foods in school premises

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The food safety authority looks to ensure healthy diets for children in schools

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed to restrict the sale and the advertisement of food products, which are high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), in school premises and within 50 meters of the school campus.

According to the regulator, HFSS food includes deep fried foods such as french fries, fried chips, sugar-sweetened carbonated or non-carbonated beverages, ready-to-eat foods, noodles, burgers, pizzas and confectionery items among others.

This proposal is part of the draft Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Healthy Diets for School Children) Regulations, 2019, which is being finalised to define and promote healthy diets.

The regulator began working on these regulations after a direction by the Delhi High Court in 2015.

“School Authority shall ensure that no person shall offer or expose for sale of pre-packaged foods which are referred to as foods high in fat, salt and sugar as per the Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and display) Regulations, 2019, to school children in school canteens/mess premises/hostel kitchens or within 50 meters of the school campus,” the draft notification stated.

The draft regulations also proposed that food companies that make HFSS products “shall not advertise or offer for free sale of such foods to children in school premises or within 50 meters of the school campus.”

It also proposes that food companies will “not market, sell, or give away low-nutrition foods anywhere on school campus, including through logos, brand names, posters, textbook covers etc.”

‘Register as food business operators’

According to the ten point charter proposed by the FSSAI, schools that sell or cater meals on their own will be required to register themselves as food business operators. Food operators, who have been contracted for mid-day meals, will also have to ensure that they obtain registration or license in line with FSSAI's regulations.

The regulator has also proposed setting up a sub-committee by the State Level Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation of these regulations and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food to school children in the draft regulations.

It has sought views from stakeholders on the draft notification before finalisation of these regulations.

FSSAI has also given a set of general guidelines for selection of food products to be offered in school premises in its proposed regulations, and has urged schools to adopt a comprehensive programme for promoting safe and healthy diets.