

Student Nutrition and Physical Activity (Wellness Policy)

Norwalk Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting physical, social, and emotional wellness, including good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. The district supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of children. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The District shall establish and maintain a Wellness Committee, consisting of representatives from Norwalk Public Schools and the greater Norwalk community. The Committee shall recommend, review and provide oversight of the Wellness Policy, its implementation, and wellness-related issues that affect student health. All members shall participate in the ongoing assessment and revision of the policy to actively promote the health and wellness of all students and advance their readiness to learn.

District Health and Wellness Committee

The Committee will convene at least quarterly each school year, and will follow federal and state regulation for School Wellness Advisory Committees. The Committee's responsibilities are to include:

- Conducting an annual review of district-wide policies to promote student wellness, and recommending district-wide policies or revisions, as needed;
- Creating and implementing a Health and Wellness Action Plan each year including timelines, processes, goals and school-based activities designed to promote student and staff wellness based on the results of the district's annual assessments;
- Providing guidance for the implementation of district-level policies related to wellness;
- Assisting district officials in the evaluation of the district's Wellness Policy and schools' wellness initiatives, including the development and delivery of assessment tools;
- Collecting and sharing information about wellness programs and services;
- Reporting on progress towards committee goals, objectives, policies, monitoring and evaluation of Health and Wellness Policy implementation at least once every three years (triennially).
- Working closely with district officials to ensure that appropriate communication of the Wellness Policy, revisions, and progress reports are provided to the public.

Membership: The Committee shall include representative membership from:

- A member of the Superintendent's Senior Management Team, and/or their designee
- Administrators/NPS staff representing the following areas:
 - Curriculum
 - Health services/Nursing
 - Guidance
 - School Food Services
 - Physical Education
 - Health Education

- School Based Health Centers
- Parents
- Students
- Community Partners

A liaison from each school will be designated as a point of contact for the Wellness Committee. The liaison can be a member of the School Governance Committee or School Safety Committee, or can be another person designated by the principal who would have knowledge about the implementation of the Policy at that school.

A representative from the Board of Education will be designated to serve as a liaison to the Committee.

Goals for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Communications

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure compliance with the established district-wide school wellness policy. In each school, the Principal or designee shall ensure compliance with those policies in his or her school.

School food service staff members, at the school or district level, shall ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and shall report on this matter to the Superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school Principal).

The Superintendent or designee shall provide annual implementation data and/or reports to the Wellness Committee and Board of Education concerning this policy's implementation, so that the Board can monitor and adjust the policy as needed.

Policy Review

The District shall identify a strategy and schedule to help review policy compliance, assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement. The strategy delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make changes, specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities to promote student wellness.

The District and individual schools within the District shall, as necessary, revise the school wellness policy and develop work plans to facilitate its implementation.

The district shall share the Wellness Policy and any updates with the public at least annually, and shall share triennial progress reports with the public. The district Wellness Policy and progress reports can be found on the Norwalk Public Schools website.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Goals for Nutrition Education

Nutrition education shall be offered as part of a planned, ongoing, systematic, sequential, standards-based, comprehensive school health education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. Nutrition education shall use national or state-developed standards, such as the Connecticut State Department of Education's Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework. The district shall develop and implement a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, curriculum approach to nutrition in all grades. Students shall be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill development and practice.

The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors, be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state's/district's comprehensive school health education standards/guidelines/curriculum framework. Nutrition themes include but are not limited to:

- My Plate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Healthy Eating Plan)
- Identify and limit foods of low nutrient density
- Healthy heart choices
- Food labels
- Sources and functions of major nutrients
- Multicultural influences
- Guide to a healthy diet
- Serving sizes
- Diet and disease
- Proper food safety and sanitation
- Understanding calories
- Body-size acceptances, healthy weight and dangers of unhealthy weight-control practices
- Healthy snacks

The district nutrition policy reinforces nutrition education to help students practice these themes in a supportive school environment. Nutrition education shall also be included in other classroom content areas such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, family and consumer sciences and elective subjects. Instructional staff is encouraged to integrate nutritional themes into daily lessons when appropriate, to reinforce and support health messages.

The school district shall assess all nutrition education lessons and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state's/district's educational goals and curriculum standards. Materials developed by food marketing boards or food corporations shall be examined for appropriateness of commercial messages.

Educational Reinforcement

School instructional staff members are encouraged to collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families.

Nutrition Promotion

The school district is encouraged to conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students and the community, including but not limited to programs such as Team Nutrition and the Healthier US School Challenge.

Professional Development for Teachers

The District shall include appropriate training for teachers and other staff members. Staff members responsible for nutrition education shall be adequately prepared and shall regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with the development of skills and adequate time to practice skills in program-specific activities. Training shall include instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating behaviors. Staff members providing nutrition education shall not advocate dieting behaviors or any specific eating regimen to students, other staff members or parents.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing shall be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. Thus, schools shall limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrient standards for meals or the District's nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Schools shall promote healthy food choices. The promotion of nutrient-dense foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, shall be encouraged.

Education Links with School

Nutrition education may be offered in the school cafeteria and classroom, with coordination between school food service and teachers. The district shall link nutrition education with other coordinated school health initiatives. The nutrition education program may link with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services that occur outside the classroom or that link classroom nutrition education to the larger school community, such as school gardens, cafeteria-based nutrition education and afterschool programs. For example, schools are encouraged to utilize instructional gardens to provide students with experiences in planting, harvesting, preparation, serving, and tasting foods, including ceremonies and celebrations that observe food traditions, integrated with nutrition education and core curriculum, and articulated with state standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Norwalk Public Schools is committed to a district-wide, strategic effort to increase all students' physical activity and fitness. The district strives to incorporate physical education and physical activity in schools, improve the quality of physical education and recess, as well as increase the equity of physical activity programs and resources across schools. These goals are addressed in detail in district Policy 6142.61.

SCHOOL FOOD

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Reimbursable meals served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) will follow the USDA meal pattern requirements and nutrient standards in accordance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Menu planning, purchasing procedures and production techniques for school meals will be used to decrease fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugars, and to increase fiber. The school food service provider will follow minimum standards for school food quality, as outlined in the food service contract.

Menus shall be planned to be appealing and attractive to children and will incorporate the basic menu planning principles of balance, variety, contrast, color and eye appeal. Menus shall be planned with input from students, parents and other school personnel and shall take into account students' cultural norms and preferences. Schools shall engage students and parents, through surveys, taste-tests and other activities, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices. Meal patterns and nutrition standards of federal regulations will be fulfilled as required.

The district will share information regarding the nutrition content of school meals with students, families and school staff. Nutrition information for a la carte foods and beverages sold in schools will also be available.

With appropriate medical documentation, modified meals shall be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs. Upon written parental permission and a medical statement by a physician that identifies the student's disability, states why the disability restricts the student's diet, identifies the major life activity affected by the disability, and states the foods to be omitted and the food or choices of foods that must be substituted.

Such food substitutions will be made for students without disabilities on a case-by-case basis when the parent/guardian submits a signed request that includes a medical statement signed by a physician, physical assistant, registered dietician or nurse practitioner. The medical statement must state the medical condition or special dietary need that restricts the student's diet and provide a list of foods that may be substituted in place of the lunch or breakfast menu being served.

The district shall help ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn. Schools will:

- to the extent possible, operate and promote the School Breakfast Program;
- to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and use methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess;
- notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program (if the school serves breakfast to students); and
- Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Cafetería A La Carta Sales*

The school food service program must follow the Connecticut Nutrition Standards when determining the items for a la carte sales. All beverages sold to students in school meals and as a la carte sales must meet the requirements of state statute and USDA requirements for a la carte foods.

At all times when food is available for purchase by students during the school day, nutritious and low-fat foods must also be available for sale at the same time. These foods may include, but shall not be limited to, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit.

The sale of beverages, as part of school meals and as a la carte sales, shall be limited to the following five categories defined by state statute:

1. Milk, low-fat (1%) unflavored or nonfat which may be flavored or unflavored but contains no artificial sweeteners and no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce; (federal regulation require non-fat or 1% low fat milk)*
2. Nondairy milks, such as soy, rice, or lactose-free milk, which may be flavored or unflavored but contains no artificial sweeteners, no more than 4 grams of sugar per fluid ounce, no more than 35% of calories from fat per serving, and no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat per serving;*
3. 100% fruit or vegetable juice or combination of such juices, containing no added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners;*
4. Beverages that contain only water and fruit or vegetable juice and have no added sugars, sweeteners, or artificial sweeteners; and*
5. Water, which may be flavored but must contain no added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.*

(*Consult the CSDE's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages for allowable products.)

Lunchroom Climate

A lunchroom environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed. It is encouraged that the lunchroom environment be a place where students have:

- adequate space to eat and pleasant surroundings;
- appropriate supervision; and
- convenient access to hand washing facilities before meals.

Meal Schedules

Meal periods shall be scheduled at appropriate hours. In compliance with federal regulations, lunch must be scheduled between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. in all schools. Pursuant to state statute, schools are required to provide all full day students a daily lunch period of not less than 20 minutes. This time period shall not include recess time, and meals shall occur after recess. Activities such as tutoring, clubs or organizational meetings or activities shall not be scheduled during meal times unless students may eat during such activities.

Qualifications of Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals shall administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, continuing professional development shall be provided for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs shall include appropriate certification and/or training programs for school food service directors, managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Training for Food Service Staff

All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations and regularly participate in professional development activities that address requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, menu planning and preparation, food safety, strategies for promoting healthy eating behaviors and other appropriate topics.

Summer Food Service Program

Schools in which more than 50 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals shall sponsor the Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year.

Other Foods Offered or Sold

To create a school environment that supports the promotion of healthy food and beverage choices for children, it is important to consider all venues where food and beverages are consumed or sold. The Connecticut Nutrition Standards apply to all food sold or served to students on school premises, including but not limited to, cafeteria a la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, activities and classroom snacks. All beverages sold or served to students at school shall meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations, whichever are stricter, at all times.

However, beverages not meeting the requirements of state statute and foods not meeting the Connecticut Nutrition Standards may be sold or served at the location of an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. The district strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient-dense foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes.

Pursuant to state statute (CGS 10-221p), whenever any group makes foods available for purchase in a school during the school day, low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruits must also be available in the school at the same time for purchase by students. "Foods available for purchase" include, but are not limited to, foods sold in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers and any other food sales during the school day. This includes the following:

- If a snack machine with food items is available for use by students during the school day, the school must also have non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit available for purchase. When the snack machine is operating outside of cafeteria hours, schools must make alternate provisions to offer non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit for sale at the same time.

- School stores that sell food to students must ensure that non-fat or low-fat dairy products and fresh or dried fruit are available for purchase either in the store itself or elsewhere in the school, while the school store is selling food.

Access to Drinking Water

Students and staff will have access to safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Fluoridated or bottled water that does not contain added sugars, sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine, should be made available for purchase by students and staff. Schools involved in the reimbursable National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program are required to make free potable water available where meals are served.

Foods Brought Into School

The district shall encourage families to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute or foods that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. The district shall develop guidelines to help ensure that food brought from home to be shared with other students is appropriate. Classroom snacks shall feature healthy choices that meet the state requirements for allowable beverages and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards.

Sharing of Foods

Schools shall discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns with allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Fundraising

School fundraising activities shall not involve food or beverages or shall only use foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations. However, food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not meeting the requirements of state statute and federal regulations can be sold as fundraisers on school premises if they are sold at the location of an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend, provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. Schools shall encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The District shall work with the Wellness Committee to make available to students, parents, teachers and school groups a list of ideas for alternate fundraising activities, such as healthy foods and beverages or nonfood fundraisers.

Competition with nutritious meals served by the school food services operations must be minimized. Income from any competitive foods or beverages sold from 30 minutes prior to the start of any state or federally subsidized milk or meal program until 30 minutes after the end of the program must accrue to the food service account.

Concessions

Food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute and federal regulations can be sold at concessions operated at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided they are not sold from a vending machine or school store. Organizations operating concessions at school functions after school or on weekends should include at least some healthy food choices in their offerings. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a lower profit margin to encourage selection by students.

Teacher-to-Student Incentives and Punishments

Schools shall not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individualized education plan (IEP). Alternative rewards shall be developed and promoted. Schools shall not withhold foods or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

OTHER

Health Services (reference 6164.1)

School based health services are provided by school nurses (RNs) through the Norwalk Board of Education. School nursing is a specialty nursing practice that advances the well-being, academic success and lifelong achievement and health of our students by enhancing the educational process through identifying, modifying and removing health related barriers to learning. School nurses serve as a liaison among parents, school and the community in health matters.

Nurses also provide emergency care for injury and illness, dispense medications and treatments, identify communicable diseases, act as case manager for students with chronic disease conditions during school hours, promote positive behavioral health, and enact practices and systems to ensure that all students have access to key resources and services that are developmentally appropriate. School nurses function within the standards and scope of professional nursing while adhering to evidence based practice.

School nurses serve as a resource person to classroom teachers in matters pertaining to health, and actively collaborate with others (PT, OT, Speech, Social workers, psychologists and SPED staff to build student and family capacity for adaptation in school and facilitate self-management and learning.

School Health Services ensures that all students comply with state and local public health regulations and screening mandates. Parents are notified of any problems that necessitate a medical follow-up and may opt out of certain screenings.

The goal of School Health Services is to provide every student the opportunity to access the curriculum in a safe, healthy engaged, supported and challenged environment while making reasonable accommodations when appropriate.

School-Based Health Centers

The district recognizes and values the important service provided by the Dr. Robert E. Appleby School Based Health Centers (SBHCs), which provide on-site medical and mental health services to children and adolescents in the district. The district recognizes SBHCs as an important partner and works with SBHC staff to promote health and wellness in the district.

Staff Wellness

The District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and shall plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle and that encourage staff members to serve as role models.

Safe and Supportive Schools/Social and Emotional Climate

Norwalk Public Schools shall create a safe and supportive school environment for all students that is culturally proficient, engaging and inclusive. District and school-based support staff including guidance counselors and social workers shall work with school teams to provide support for students, families and staff including skill-based education to promote social and emotional learning, healthy relationships and access to support services.

Family Engagement

Norwalk Public School's values family partnerships and encourages parents to actively participate in all aspects of school wellness and their child's wellbeing. Schools are encouraged to use a variety of engagement strategies that may include:

- Sending home nutrition education materials, cafeteria menus, and ideas for physical activity
- Encouraging parents to send healthy snacks/meals to school and to promote their child's participation in physical education programs and after school activities
- Inviting parents and other family members to periodically eat with their student in the cafeteria
- Inviting families to attend exhibitions of student nutrition projects, physical education activity programs, and/or health fairs
- Offering nutrition education workshops and screening services
- Providing nutrition education and physical education homework activities that students can do with their families (e.g., reading and interpreting food labels, reading nutrition-related newsletters, preparing healthy recipes, planning active family time, etc.)
- Considering cultural preferences in development of nutrition education and physical education programs
- Collaborating agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families; and
- Encouraging school staff to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student volunteer or paid work related to nutrition, as appropriate.

Community Involvement

The Norwalk Public School District values and promotes community partnerships to enhance the overall health and wellness opportunities provided for students, families and staff. To that end, the Health and Wellness Committee shall continue to grow community participation to expand both the committee's membership as well as the programs and services afforded all students, families and staff in Norwalk Public Schools.

cf: Physical Activity, Policy 6142.61
Health Services, Policy 6164.1
Food Services, Policy 3542.1
Free and Reduced Price Breakfast and Lunch, Policy 3542.31
Student-Run Cafes, Policy 3542.35
Vending Machines, Policy 3542.45

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-16b](#) Prescribed courses of study.
[10-215](#) Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.
[10-221](#) Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.
[10-215a](#) Non public school participation in feeding program.
[10-215b](#) Duties of state board of education re: feeding programs.
[10-216](#) Payment of expenses.
[10-215e](#) Nutrition standards for food that is not part of lunch or breakfast program
[10-215f](#) Certification that food meets nutrition standards.
[10-221o](#) Lunch periods. Recess.
[10-221p](#) Boards to make available for purchase nutritious, low-fat foods.
[10-221q](#) Sale of beverages.
Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies
[10-215b-1](#) Competitive foods.
[10-215b-23](#) Income from the sale of food items.
National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Food Services. (7 CFR Parts 210.11 and 220.12)
The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law 108-265
Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, 7 CFR Parts 210 & 220
Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, P.L. 111-296, 42 U.S.C. 1751
Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (as amended by P.L. 108-269, July 2, 2004)
School Breakfast Program, 7 C.F.R. Part 220 (2006)
National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School (Federal Register, Vol. 78, No. 125, June 28, 2013)

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NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NORWALK, CONNECTICUT