



Book	Administrative & Board Policies
Section	6000: Management Support
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### **NUTRITION, HEALTH, and PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROCEDURE**

#### **Wellness Policy**

The Mercer Island School District's ("District") overall wellness policy under Administrative Policy 6700A and 6700P will include:

- Goals for nutrition education, nutrition promotion, and other school-based activities to promote wellness;
- The Smart Snacks in School standards for all foods and beverages sold to students on the District's National School Lunch Program ("NSLP") campuses during the school day, including access to water;
- Standards consistent with federal regulations for school meal programs and the Smart Snacks in School standards for other foods available to students on the District's NSLP campuses during the school day, excluding food brought from home for classroom events/parties when approved by the school principal and/or classroom teacher;
- Policies for marketing only food and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks in School standards when on NSLP campuses;
- Standards for quality physical education and nutrition education programs aligned to state learning standards that help students develop lifelong healthy behaviors;
- Promotion of activities that provide students opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Engagement of the community in support of the District's work in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits;
- Establishment of a Nutrition Committee that includes representatives from the school and that permits participation from members of the community; and
- Direct committee review and assessment of the overall wellness policy every three (3) years.

#### **Nutrition Committee**

The District will convene a Nutrition Committee for community input on nutrition and health initiatives and menu-planning, and to advise the District with its periodic review and updating. The membership of the committee will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools), and include at least one District Central Office staff member. In addition, the committee may include the following:

- Parents and caregivers;
- Students;
- Representative(s) of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director);
- Physical education teacher(s);
- School health professional(s) (e.g., health education teachers, nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists);
- School administrator(s) (e.g., superintendent, principal, associate principal),
- Mercer Island School District board members; and
- Members of the general public.

The Nutrition Committee is responsible for:

- Establishing committee membership and operating protocol;
- Understanding overall wellness policy compliance requirements;
- Recordkeeping;
- Annual public notification of Administrative Policy/Procedure, 6700A and 6700P;
- Triennial progress assessments;
- Providing input regarding menu-planning; and
- Leading community involvement, outreach and communications initiatives regarding the District's overall wellness policy.

#### **Annual Notification**

The District will notify families and the public, on an annual basis, of the availability of its overall wellness policy (Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P) and provide information that would enable interested households to obtain more details. The District will also annually distribute and collect applications to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, as set forth below. The District is encouraged to provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment.

### **Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least once every three (3) years, the District will evaluate its compliance with its overall wellness policy. The triennial assessment will consider:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P; and
- The extent to which progress has been made in attaining the goals of the Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P.

The assessment report will include the position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and their contact information.

### **Updates to District Policy**

The Nutrition Committee may suggest revisions to Policy/Procedure 6700A and/or 6700P based on the triennial assessments and/or as priorities change and new federal or state guidance or standards are issued, for District consideration.

### **Community Outreach and Communications**

The District will inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, the availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply for those programs, and District compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

### **Recordkeeping**

The District will maintain and make available for public inspection records documenting compliance with Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P on the District's website.

Records will include, but will not be limited to:

- Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P;
- Documentation demonstrating that Policy/Procedure 6700A and 6700P have been made available to the public;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment; and
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirement.

## **Nutrition and Food Services**

### **Meal Applications and Eligibility for School Meals**

As a sponsor of the NSLP, the District will provide free and reduced-price lunches to students who qualify in accordance with the program. If operating standard counting and claiming, the District will distribute the Letter to Households and Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications to all households at the beginning of each school year. The District will protect the identity of students eligible for free and reduced-price meals in accordance with USDA guidelines for confidentiality and disclosure of student eligibility for such meals.

If the District has obtained available information from other sources that the student is likely eligible for free or reduced-price meals, but the parent or guardian has not submitted an application to determine the student's eligibility, the District will complete and submit the application for the student in accordance with the authority granted under [7 C.F.R. Sec. 245.6 \(d\)](#). The completed application must set forth the District's basis for determining the student's eligibility. A District family determined eligible under this process will be notified that the family's children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals or for free milk. This determination must be made family by family, and the District will not make eligibility determinations or certifications by categories or groups of children.

If operating the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or other non-pricing option, the District will distribute the Letter to Households and the Family Income Survey to all student households at the beginning of each school year. If a parent or guardian of a student needs assistance with application materials in a language other than English, the District will offer appropriate assistance to that parent or guardian. The District will protect the student's identity and the confidentiality and disclosure of the data on a Family Income Survey.

At least monthly, the District will directly certify students for free school meals if the students qualify because of enrollment in assistance programs, including but not limited to, the supplemental nutrition assistance program, the temporary assistance for needy families, and Medicaid.

The District and its school staff will work to improve systems for identifying homeless students, students in out-of-home care, runaway students, and migrant students to ensure that each student has proper access to free school meals and that applicable accountability and reporting requirements are satisfied.

Students in prekindergarten through twelfth grade who qualify for reduced-price lunches will not be required to pay a lunch copy. [\[A1\]](#)

### **Meal Patterns and Menu Planning**

The District will follow the USDA meal patterns for the NSLP and Smart Snacks in School standards for all food and beverages sold to students on the District's NSLP campuses during the school day.

### **Community Eligibility Provision**

Beginning in the 2022-2023 school year, each school with an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 40% shall operate the USDA Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and offer meals at no cost to all students.

The Identified Student Percentage (ISP) is calculated by dividing the number of Identified Students, students categorically eligible for free school meals by direct certification or other purposes, by the total enrollment.

### **Meal Times**

The District will set meal times to allow lunch to be served between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. The length of the meal period will allow enough time for students to be served and eat a complete meal as well as take care of personal hygiene needs. The District will strive to identify and remove barriers to every student receiving 20 minutes of seated lunch time and scheduling recess for elementary students. The Superintendent or designee will periodically monitor district schools for progress in implementing these provisions to the extent appropriate and feasible.

### **Food Safety Plan**

The District will establish a Food Safety Plan based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points. Because of the potential liability of the District, the food services program will not accept donations of food other than as provided in this policy without Mercer Island School District Board ("Board") approval.

#### **Meal Pricing**

The Board shall determine paid meal prices annually and for the NSLP and follow Paid Lunch Equity regulations. Adult meal prices shall be set to be the price charged to students paying the full meal price plus the value of federal reimbursement for paid meals and the USDA Food Value.

#### **USDA Foods**

The District will use the full entitlement of USDA Foods made available under the Federal Food Distribution Program for school meal programs.

#### **Non-Profit School Food Service Account**

The District will maintain a non-profit school food service account. All revenues shall be used solely for the school meal programs and to improve the quality of the food service program for the students being served. Food sold a la carte and food sold to other school entities will be priced to recover, at a minimum, food costs.

#### **Meal Charge Policy**

In order to allow students to receive nutritious meals, prevent over-identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program, the District will establish a written meal charge process for students eligible for reduced price meals and students that are not eligible for meals. The District's meal charge policy will be communicated to households each year so that District employees, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges.

#### **Unpaid Meal Charges**

If a student has not paid for five (5) or more previous meals, the school will:

1. Determine whether the student is categorically eligible for free meals;
2. If no application has been submitted for the student to determine the student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, make no fewer than two (2) attempts to contact the student's parent or guardian to have the parent or guardian submit an application; and
3. Have a principal, associate principal, or school counselor contact the parent or guardian for the purpose of:
  - a. Offering assistance with completing an application to determine the student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals;
  - b. Determining whether there are any household issues that may prevent the student from having sufficient funds for school meals; and
  - c. Offering any other appropriate assistance.

No school or school district personnel or school volunteer may:

1. Take any action that would publicly identify a student who cannot pay for a school meal or for meals previously served to the student, including but not limited to requiring the student to wear a wristband, hand stamp, or other identifying marker, or by serving the student an alternative meal;
2. Require a student who cannot pay for a school meal or for meals previously served to the student to perform chores or other actions in exchange for a meal or for the reduction or elimination of a school meal debt, unless all students perform similar chores or work;
3. Require a student to dispose of an already-served meal because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of money owed for meals previously served to the student;
4. Allow any disciplinary action that is taken against a student to result in the denial or delay of a nutritionally adequate meal to the student; or
5. Require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs in excess of the actual amounts owed for meals previously served to the student.

Communications by the District about amounts owed for meals previously served to a student under the age of fifteen (15) may only be directed to the student's parent or guardian. Neither this policy nor chapter [28A.235 RCW](#) prohibit the District from sending a student home with a notification that is addressed to the student's parent or guardian.

A parent or guardian will be notified of a negative balance of a student's meal account no later than ten (10) days after the student's school meal account has reached a negative balance. Within thirty (30) days of sending this notification, the District will exhaust all options to directly certify the student for free or reduced-price meals. Within these thirty (30) days, while the District is attempting to certify the student for free or reduced-price meals, the student may not be denied access to a school meal unless the district determines that the student is ineligible for free or reduced-price meals.

If the District is unable to directly certify the student for free or reduced-price meals, the District will provide the parent or guardian with a paper copy of, or an electronic link to, an application for free or reduced-price meals with the negative-balance notification described above and encourage the parent or guardian to submit the application.

The District's meal charge policy will also address unpaid meal charges. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

#### **Children with Special Dietary Needs**

The District will establish procedures to accommodate children with special dietary needs when a diet prescription form is signed by a licensed medical authority. The District food service department will work with the school or District 504 Coordinator to accommodate student special dietary needs.

#### **Civil Rights**

The District will follow USDA Food and Nutrition Civil Rights and nondiscrimination policies.

#### **Procurement**

The District will follow all state and Federal guidelines when procuring food for the Federal School Meal Programs and as part of District procurement procedures, establish a procurement plan and Code of Conduct consistent with the Uniform Grant Guidance: [2 CFR 200](#). Food specifications shall be written in a manner to procure food products that meet the school meal pattern requirements.

### Smart Snacks Standards in School

All foods and beverages sold to students on the District's NSLP campuses during the school day (e.g., vending machines, DECA school stores, bake sales, and other school fundraisers) must meet USDA Smart Snacks standards. No food or drink items will be sold unless they have been approved by the principal or school official responsible for oversight of the Smart Snacks standards or, as designated in Administrative Policy 6700A.

### Best Practices for Meal Service

The Superintendent or designee will make reasonable efforts to ensure:

- Student participation in the lunch programs is encouraged;
- Any student may eat in the school cafeteria or other designated place;
- Schools provide varied and nutritious food choices consistent with the applicable school meal program guidelines;
- Healthy foods are competitively priced;
- Meal prices are conspicuously posted in each cafeteria or designated meal area;
- Seating for meals is uncrowded and occurs in a pleasant and safe environment;
- Supervision during mealtime is appropriate and rules for mealtime behavior are consistently enforced; and
- Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2 Special Assistance Program is implemented in qualifying schools.

### Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, and unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring with them and carry throughout the day approved water bottles (filled only with water).

### Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on a District NSLP campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless otherwise approved by the school principal and/or classroom teacher, including:

- Foods brought for celebrations and parties. The District will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents. The District will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snack nutrition standards.
- Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

### Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

### Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

### Nutrition Education

The District's K-12 nutrition education curriculum will align with the Washington State Health and Physical Education K-12 Learning Standards and will be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The District's nutrition education K-12 curriculum should include, but not be limited to, the following concepts:

- Age-appropriate, developmentally-appropriate, and culturally relevant nutritional knowledge, including:
  - the relationship of nutrition and food nutrients to physical performance and body composition;
  - the benefits of healthy eating;
  - essential nutrients;
  - nutritional deficiencies;
  - the principles of healthy weight management;
  - the use and misuse of dietary supplements;
  - safe food preparation, handling, and storage; and
  - appreciation of cultural diversity related to food and eating.
- Age-appropriate nutrition-related skills, including how to:
  - gather and analyze health information;
  - analyze nutrition information to plan and prepare a healthy meal;
  - understand and use food labels,
  - evaluate nutrition information, misinformation, and commercial food and advertising; and
  - assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement, and achieve those goals.

### Physical Education and Activity

#### Health and Physical Education

The Superintendent or designee will adopt and implement a comprehensive physical education curriculum aligned with the Washington State Health and Physical Education K-12 Learning Standards. The District will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum. The physical education program will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits.

#### Physical Education Requirements and Waiver Policy

All high school students are required to complete a minimum of three semesters (1.5 credits) of physical education. All middle school students will complete three (3) trimesters of physical education. The District may excuse a student from this fitness requirement under [RCW 28A.230.050](#) on account of physical disability, employment, religious belief, participation in directed athletics or military science or tactics, or for other good cause. Such excused students will be required to demonstrate proficiency/competency in the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement, in accordance with written District Policy/Procedure 2409.

Although physical disability can be used as a rationale for excusing a student from participation in Physical Education, the District will provide Adapted Physical Education that is aligned to Washington state K-12 Physical Education Learning Standards if physical education is set out in that student's IEP and is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability.

### Professional Learning

The District will, subject to available resources, offer ongoing in-service and professional learning opportunities for staff in the area of health education, physical education and physical activity. Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing District reform or academic improvement plans/efforts. Professional learning opportunities related to health and fitness are available at: <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/resources-subject-area/health-and-physical-education/training-and-staff-development>.

### Physical Activity in Schools

All schools will promote physical activity and may participate in programs such as the [Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program](#) (CSPAP). Physical activity programs should take a multi-component approach by which the District and its schools use all opportunities for students to be physically active, meet the national recommendation for physical activity each day, and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime. The program should reflect a strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation, physical activity before, during, and after school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement.

### Quality Physical Education

Schools will implement a physical education program which includes instruction and practice in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns; knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance; knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness; responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others; and values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

### Physical Activity during the School Day

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Schools will encourage teachers to:

- Incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.
- Provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

### Physical Activity Before and After School

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods (e.g., physical activity clubs, intramurals, sports, etc.).

### Recess

Each elementary school will offer physically active daily recess opportunities and maintain safe and age-appropriate equipment to use during recess. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active. Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, brain boosters/energizers, or physical education) will not be used or withheld as punishment for any reason.

If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating.

### Family and Community Engagement

The District will offer opportunities to promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing physical education and physical activity in the schools. Schools should ensure:

- Physical education activity ideas are sent home with students.
- Families are invited to attend and participate in physical education activity programs and health fairs.
- School staff are encouraged to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity programs.
- Families are actively notified of opportunities and invited to participate in school-sponsored physical activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

### Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The District will offer, subject to available resources, opportunities that focus on staff wellness issues, and/or identify and disseminate wellness resources in coordination with human resources staff.

### Active Transport

The District, in partnership with the City of Mercer Island, will identify safe and active routes to and from school to promote alternative transport methods for children, such as walking and bicycle programs. The District will encourage this behavior by engaging and promoting activities such as:

- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school;
- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week;
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area);
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students;
- Promotion of safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper;
- Use of crossing guards;
- Ensuring crosswalks exist on streets leading to schools;
- Documentation of the number of children walking and/or biking to and from school; and
- Creation and distribution of maps of the school environment (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, roads, pathways, bike racks, etc.).

### School District Facilities

Access to school sites will be provided through permitting use of facilities to community youth sports groups consistent with the District's facilities use policy, municipal joint use agreements, and partnerships with youth organizations so additional opportunities are available for all youth in the community to participate in quality physical activity, fitness, sports, and recreation programs.

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