

Hellgate Elementary Wellness Policy

Philosophy

Hellgate Elementary is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

The local school wellness policy is a written plan that includes methods to promote student wellness, prevent and reduce childhood obesity, and provide assurance that school meals and other food and beverages sold and otherwise made available on the school campus during the school day are consistent with applicable minimum Federal standards.

Policy Leadership

Hellgate Elementary school district has devised a wellness committee made up of a diverse group of stakeholders from the list below to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the policy.

- School administrator
- School Nurse
- Classroom Teacher
- Community member/parent
- Physical education teacher
- Student
- PTA representative
- Medical/healthcare professional
- Nutrition specialist/ Dietitian

The superintendent shall implement and ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy by leading the review, update, and evaluation of the policy.

Guidelines for all Foods Sold On Campus

We understand that having access to healthy foods and beverages during school hours is important for students' academic success, long-term health, and reinforces Hellgate Elementary's commitment to healthy eating habits. The following standards apply to all foods and beverages sold to students from the midnight before school starts until one-half hour after school ends and includes foods and beverages sold in:

- Meals through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs
- Fundraisers
- Vending machines
- School stores
- A la carte sales by Food Services
- Day Care programs(Latchkey) and before/after school programs

The district will participate in the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#) and [Breakfast Program](#) (SBP) and will provide meals that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for school meals (see below).

The district will ensure that all food and beverages sold to students outside of the school meal programs shall meet the [USDA Smart Snacks standards](#). A selection of acceptable choices of approved foods and beverages has been developed and will be updated annually by the district's Wellness Committee. This list will be distributed to school sites for planning purposes. Procedures evaluating compliance using Nutrition Facts are also available through Food Services.

I. Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- A. be appealing and attractive to children;
- B. be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- C. meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- D. offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- E. serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk – white or flavored;
- F. ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

II. Breakfast - to 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:

- A. Schools will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- B. Schools will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- C. Schools that serve breakfast to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- D. Schools will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

III. Free and Reduced-Priced Meals:

- A. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are receiving free and reduced-priced school meals.

IV. Meal Times and Scheduling:

- A. Schools will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch.
- B. Schools will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes unless students eat during such activities.
- C. Schools will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
- D. Schools will provide dining areas with enough seating space for all students assigned to a lunch period.

I. **Fundraising**

- A. Foods and beverages sold to students during school hours (the midnight before school starts until ½ hour after school ends) must adhere to nutrition standards outlined in this policy. Parental pickup of items is permitted during school hours.
- B. Foods and beverages sold outside of school hours or whose sales are not directed at students are exempt from this policy.
- C. Profit from the sales of foods and beverages on school grounds must directly benefit school academics and/or activities. Use of funds must be clearly posted at the point of purchase, for example "Proceeds used for the PTA."
- D. Financial accounting of such sales will adhere to Hellgate Elementary accounting practices and procedures.
- E. Any new marketing, advertising, signage or promotion of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar shall be excluded from school grounds.

II. **Vending Machines**

- A. Foods and beverages sold in student-accessed vending machines must adhere to nutrition standards outlined in this policy and can operate at any time during the school day. Staff accessed vending machines are exempt from this policy.
- B. Profit from the sales of foods and beverages sold in vending machines on school grounds must directly benefit school academics and/or activities. Use of funds must be clearly posted at the point of purchase, for example "Proceeds from this machine used for the Adventure Club." III
- C. . Financial accounting of such sales will adhere to Hellgate Elementary accounting practices and procedures.
- D. All vending contracts must have signed copies of the district Independent Contractor forms attached and copies sent to Food Services. Keep in mind the non-compete agreement with Food Services.
- E. Any marketing, advertising, signage, or promotion of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar shall be excluded from school grounds, including vending machine signage. Neutral signage, such as students engaged in sports, is acceptable.

III. School Stores

- A. Foods and beverages sold during school hours (the midnight before school starts until ½ hour after school ends) must adhere to nutrition standards outlined in this policy and can be sold during the school day. However, no food items may be sold at school during the district meal serving times as this will present competition for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- B. Foods and beverages sold outside of school hours are exempt from this policy.
- C. Profit from the sales of foods and beverages in school stores must directly benefit school academics and/or activities. Use of funds must be clearly posted at the point of purchase, for example "Proceeds from this store used for the soccer team."
- D. Financial accounting of such sales will adhere to Hellgate Elementary accounting practices and procedures.
- E. Any marketing, advertising, signage or promotion of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar shall be excluded from school stores.

IV. A la Carte

- A. Foods and beverages sold to students must adhere to nutrition standards outlined in this policy.
- B. Any marketing, advertising, signage or promotion of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar shall be excluded from school grounds.

V. Day Care Programs and School Events

- A. During school hours (The midnight before school starts until ½ hour after school ends) parents and organizations are encouraged to serve students foods and beverages that support the District's commitment to healthy eating habits. Foods sold to students during this period will adhere to the [USDA Smart Snacks Standards](#).

Foods Provided But Not Sold On Campus

The district encourages foods offered on the school campus meet or exceed the [USDA Smart Snacks in School standards](#) including those provided at celebrations will be promoted and a list of ideas is available. [Hellgate School Snack List](#)

Nutrition Standards

- I. The following beverages shall not be sold or served at schools:

- a. Soft drinks, sports drinks (except in high schools), punches, iced teas, "designer" drinks, "enhanced" waters, or "designer" dairy drinks with more than 15 grams of added sugar per 8 oz. serving.
- b. Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100 percent real juice or that contain added artificial or natural sweeteners.
- c. Drinks containing caffeine or other additives, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.

II. The following may be sold or served at schools:

- a. Fruit-based drinks that contain at least 100 percent fruit juice and that do not contain added sweeteners.
- b. Plain water or seltzer.
- c. Low-fat or fat-free milk, including but not limited to chocolate milk, soy milk, rice milk, and other similar dairy or nondairy calcium-fortified milk.
- d. The maximum portion size for beverages is 16 oz., excluding plain water.

III. All snacks, sweets, or side dishes sold on school sites outside of the federal school meal program shall meet all of the following standards.

- a. Have 35 percent or less of its total calories from fat. Of that 35%, not more than 10 percent of calories can come from saturated fats and no trans fat is allowed. Nuts, seeds, fluid milk products containing 1% or less fat, and cheese or yogurt made from reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat free milk are exempt from this standard.
- b. Have 35 percent or less of its calories from added sugars, excluding sugars occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, and dairy ingredients (lactose).
- c. No more than 600 mg. of sodium per serving.
- d. No more than 300 calories or less per serving
- e. Be limited to the following maximum portion sizes:
 - i. One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky.
 - ii. Two ounces for cookies or cereal bars.
 - iii. Three ounces for bakery items, including but not limited to, pastries and muffins.
 - iv. Three fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, ice cream.
 - v. Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt.
 - vi. One and a half ounces for cheese.
 - vii. Sixteen ounces for beverages, excluding plain water.
 - viii. Entree items and side dishes, including, but not limited to, French fries and onion rings, shall be no larger than the portions of those foods served as part of the federal school meal programs.

IV. Fruits and vegetables may be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold

Food and Beverage Marketing

All foods and beverages marketed to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed [Smart Snack guidelines](#). This includes the marketing of products on the exterior of vending machines, posters, flyers, menu boards, coolers, cups used for beverage dispensing, and other food service equipment.

Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing to only those foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards set forth by the USDA's Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools (Smart Snacks) rule.

Hellgate Elementary Wellness-based Goals:

Promoting school student wellness requires a comprehensive approach that addresses nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and overall well-being. By setting clear goals and implementing these strategies, we can create an environment that supports the overall wellness of our students and promotes healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

Goals for Hellgate Elementary include:

Goal #1: Increase access to nutritious food options and promote healthy eating habits among students.

- a. Implement nutrition education programs that teach students about balanced diets, portion control, and the importance of consuming fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- b. Provide healthier food choices in school cafeterias and vending machines, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products.
- c. Encourage students to bring packed lunches from home that include nutritious options and limiting the availability of sugary snacks and beverages.

Goal #2: Increase opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day.

- a. Incorporate physical education classes into the curriculum with a focus on activities that promote cardiovascular health, strength, flexibility, and coordination.
- b. Provide recess breaks and structured playtime to allow students to engage in physical activity and reduce sedentary behavior.
- c. Offer extracurricular sports programs, intramural leagues, or fitness clubs to encourage students to participate in regular physical activity outside of school hours.

- d. Integrate movement breaks into classroom routines to help students stay active and focused throughout the day.

Goal #3: Support mental health and emotional well-being among students.

- a. Implement mindfulness activities, relaxation techniques, or yoga classes to help students manage stress and anxiety.
- b. Provide access to counseling services or mental health resources for students who may be struggling with emotional or behavioral issues.

Goal #4: Create a supportive and inclusive school environment that prioritizes student wellness.

- a. Implement anti-bullying policies and programs to foster a safe and respectful school community.
- b. Encourage positive peer relationships and social connections through group activities, team-building exercises, or mentorship programs.
- c. Involve students in decision-making processes related to wellness initiatives, such as forming wellness committees or student-led clubs focused on health promotion.

Nutrition Education

The District shall provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, and standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health and empower them to live a healthier lifestyle (See Goal #1 above).

Specific examples include the *Teaching Strategies for Pre-K* curriculum for the Early Literacy Program; a unit of study called Seeds, the *Twig Science* curriculum for K-6 covers various plant-related topics, the connection with our Hellgate school garden and corresponding curriculum from *Twig Science* for Kindergarten-6th grade, and *Science Dimensions* for 7th and 8th grade.

Nutrition Promotion

The district will ensure that students and staff receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school campus including in classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. The district and all schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students across the school campus during the school day and will encourage participation in school meal programs.

The District's food service department utilizes the [Montana Team Nutrition Designing Healthy Lunchroom Checklists](#) to continuously determine ways to improve the school meals and environment.

The district will ensure the promotion of healthy food and beverage choices through:

- a. Poster signage
- b. School announcements
- c. Monthly Hawks Health Newsletters
- d. Website postings
- e. Working in and consuming goods from The District's community garden

Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. The district shall provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The district shall also encourage and support physical activity among students and provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity in addition to physical education.

Because exercise improves behavior and learning in students, the denial of scheduled recess is discouraged as a discipline tool to be used on a regular basis. The decision to deny a student his/her scheduled recess time will involve a review of individual student situations in the areas of negative student behavior and/or poor academic performance.

Additionally, the district recognizes that students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education classes. Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.

All students will have daily, supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

The district encourages schools to use fundraisers and events that promote physical activity. Examples of this include the annual Grey-Hammy fun run, Day of Awesomeness, field day, Strength and conditioning education in middle school, and physical education for all students on campus.

Triennial Assessment

The district will assess the implementation of this policy and inform and update the public every three years, at a minimum, regarding compliance with the policy, how it compares to model wellness policies, and progress in attaining the goals of the wellness policy. This review shall take place during the annual Wellness Committee Meeting. Any updates to the policy will be

reviewed annually with staff during LAUNCH day and posted on the district website for students, caregivers, and other community members to access.

FAQ about the Hellgate Elementary Wellness Policy

1. Why is there a district wellness policy?

It is a Federally mandated law and the District supports such a policy in response to soaring childhood obesity and related deadly disorders.

- Childhood obesity has tripled since 1970.
- Rates of asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and other disorders in children have skyrocketed correspondingly.
- Some researchers say that the current generation of children may be the first in human history to live shorter life spans than their parent's generation.
- Obesity and related health crises are far more severe among African American, Latino and economically disadvantaged children.

The district policy prohibits schools from selling "junk food" in their a la carte program, vending machines, school stores, and fundraisers during the school day as one way of addressing the rising obesity/Type 2 diabetes crisis. Other ways of addressing this problem can include more nutrition education for staff, parents, and students.

Because children learn from the adults around them, parents, teachers, and staff are all encouraged to model good eating habits for students, including providing nutritious food for lunches, school parties, and events and refraining from using candy as rewards or prizes. The average student sees over 10,000 advertisements per year for food, nearly all of it non-nutritious junk food. However, research shows that children are more likely to be influenced by messages sent by significant adults in their lives than by messages sent by the media. Modeling good eating habits for students can really make a difference in the fight against obesity.

2. Why are fundraising food sales during the school day a concern?

The federally subsidized National School Lunch Program (NSLP-see link at the end of this document) provides the "lunch-line" menus at all schools, offering free or reduced-priced lunch to low-income students. Other students pay full (through reasonable) prices for those meals. The lunch-line meals must conform to federal nutritional standards (including federally

mandated limits on fat content and requirements for vitamin, mineral, and protein content). Greater participation in the lunch program could support higher-quality cuisine for all students.

3. When can schools sell soda, candy, and chips? When can't they?

All food sold during the school day must meet Hellgate Elementary's nutritional standards. That means soda, candy, and chips may be sold only after school (from ½ hour after instruction ends), during non-instructional hours, at school events such as performances or sports as long as sales do not begin the midnight before school starts until one-half hour after school ends. There is no limit to the number of such sales which can be held, as long as they are not during the school day. Individuals or groups are encouraged to offer healthy choices or alternatives to selling foods to raise money.

4. When can students sell food?

At the discretion of the principal, students may sell district approved food during school hours. There are no nutrition guidelines for foods sold from ½ hour after school or on evenings, weekends, or holidays. However healthy foods are preferred and students are encouraged to offer healthy choices or use alternatives to selling foods to raise money.

5. What about other food sales during the school day?

All foods sold to students during the school day must follow the nutrition guidelines established by the district. However, no food items may be sold at school during the district meal serving times as this will present competition for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). To clarify: teachers, parents, and students may not sell nachos, candy, bake sale items, or any foods or beverages not approved by the district during the school day. Beverages and snacks approved by the district may be sold during school as long as the prices are no lower than foods or beverages sold by Food Services. Any other food or beverages may only be sold at school events ½ hour after school ends. It is strongly urged that parents and school staff explore non-food based fundraising options, or those based on the sale of healthy food, like fruit baskets.

6. Can we still have bake sales?

Parents may hold school bake sales at school events starting the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day on weekdays or anytime on weekends or school holidays. Healthy foods are preferred at all food sales, and parents are encouraged to use recipes which minimize sweeteners and fats, and incorporate whole grain flour and fruits or vegetables, where appropriate (zucchini bread, whole wheat banana muffins, etc.) Parents are encouraged to also offer fresh fruit and bottled water for sale at any food fundraising event

7. Groups want to run a "snack shop" to raise money for a special field trip. Can we sell healthy snacks to the kids after school?

Yes. Groups may sell district approved snacks during school hours. Only district approved foods may be sold. Parents are encouraged to also offer fresh fruits and bottled water for sale at any food fundraising event.

8. Can we still hold our fundraising catalog sale, which offers candy as well as gift wrap? How about See's candy or cookie dough?

Parents and staff are strongly urged to plan fundraising activities, which do not include the sale of non-nutritious food. Pickup of catalog sale items that do offer candy and gift-wrap items, as well as cookie dough, may be done during the day by parents or guardians. Students may be given these items at the end of the day to take home but not during instructional time.

9. Can students have soda and chips at their class party?

Yes. The decision about what foods are acceptable for a class party, picnic, or celebration is made by the teacher. While the policy will not ban certain items from parties, the school district encourages teachers and parents to use classroom parties as an opportunity to practice what kids are learning about healthy eating. The school district strongly encourages that teachers follow the Healthy Classroom Party guide.

10. What about food for our PTA potluck dinner, or our teacher appreciation luncheon?

District nutrition standards apply only to food which is sold, not food which is served at no charge. Free refreshments at a PTA meeting or open house are not subject to district wellness policy, but refreshments which are sold are subject to the policy if such sales occur during school hours. School picnics, class parties, teacher appreciation, luncheons, or breakfasts, and other events are also exempt from district wellness standards, so long as the food is shared at no charge, rather than sold. However, all adults are asked to model healthy eating for students. It sends a conflicting message to the students when they learn about proper nutrition in health or science class, and are served only nutritious food in the cafeteria, but see their parents and teachers routinely serving mostly soda, chips, doughnuts, and cookies at their school events. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy options at school events, including bottled water and fresh fruits and vegetables.

11. Can our school still have vending machines?

Schools may have vending machines, but they must be stocked only with items approved by the school district. All vending contracts must have district Independent Contractor forms attached and a copy sent to Food Services. Food and beverages consumed in administrative and faculty areas that are not accessible to students, are exempted from this policy.

12. Can teachers use food as rewards for classroom behavior or as academic awards?

Yes, but they must meet district nutritional standards. Students also enjoy oranges, small packages of raisins, bags of pretzels, or fruit and cereal bars, etc. However, the school district encourages the use of non-food rewards.

13. How will the district nutrition policy be enforced?

The Hellgate Elementary Food Services and building principals will work cooperatively to enforce the policy as it applies to food sold or served in the cafeteria and on school grounds during instructional hours.