Book	RPS Bylaws and Policies
Section	Section 8: Student
Title	WELLNESS POLICY
Code	POLICY 8-5.1
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POLICY 8-5.1 WELLNESS POLICY

The School Board of the City of Richmond is committed to the health, safety, and well-being of its students. The School Board recognizes that the mental and physical well-being of its students is vital to all students' academic and social progress. To that end, the division superintendent is directed to develop procedures to (1) promote positive and healthy self-images for students; (2) assist in the identification of students who require additional support to regain and/or maintain healthy self-images; (3) communicate with parents or guardians of students identified under this policy and (4) identify division-wide and community resources available to support students identified under this policy.

Leadership and Public Involvement

Richmond Public Schools, with support from the School Health Advisory Board (SHAB), will implement and ensure compliance with the division's Wellness Policy.

The School Health Advisory Board consists of a group of individuals representing the division and community, and should include parents, caregivers, students, school nutrition personnel, school board members, teachers, division staff, health professionals, and members of the public.

Periodically, Richmond Public Schools will consider revisions to the policy and at that time, in coordination with the SHAB, engage a diverse group of stakeholders to review the revisions. Annually, Richmond Public Schools will inform families and the public about the content, implementation, and/or any updates to the Wellness Policy through the division website and/or School Board updates.

School Meals

Richmond Public Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and At-Risk Child and Adult Care Feeding Program CACFP).

All meals served to students must meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations at 7CFR210.10 and 7CFR220.8.

Every school within Richmond Public Schools will provide breakfast through at least one alternative breakfast service model in addition to the traditional breakfast service in the cafeteria to encourage breakfast consumption and ensure access for every student. Alternative breakfast models include Breakfast in the Classroom, Grab-and-Go Breakfast, and Second Chance Breakfast.

In accordance with Policy 6-5.1 LUNCH PRIVILEGES, schools shall seek to provide pupils with a minimum of twenty (20) minutes of seat time (not including time spent walking to and from class or waiting in line) to consume lunch. Further information about policies related to school meals can be found in Policy 6-5.2 FOOD SERVICES.

Water Access

Richmond Public Schools shall ensure that schools provide all students, teachers, and staff with free, easily accessible, and safe drinking water on school grounds, both throughout the school day and beyond regular school hours during after-school activities that take place on school grounds.

Easily accessible water must be freely available across school campuses in high-traffic and common areas, including but not limited to hallways, cafeterias, gymnasiums, outdoor physical activity spaces, and faculty lounges. During mealtimes, schools must provide adequate, easy access to drinking water and access to cups or other drinking containers. Water sources must be accessible to all people, regardless of age, ability, or disability.

There must be a minimum of one (1) drinking fountain or bottle filling station per one hundred (100) building occupants. Bottle-filling stations may be integrated into drinking fountains.

Water sources and fixtures must be regularly cleaned to maintain sanitary conditions and maintained on a regular basis to ensure they function properly. If a bottle filling station needs repair or a filter change, staff should inform the principal, who will submit a maintenance request. If there's no response within one week, the principal will follow up with the principal director and then the Chief Wellness Officer if necessary.

Drinking water must be filtered and cooled to encourage consumption. Students, teachers, and staff shall be allowed to bring and carry approved water bottles. The misuse of water bottles may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Responsible Ethics (SCORE).

Competitive Foods and Beverages

"Competitive food" means all food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under programs authorized by the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day. Competitive foods meet the nutrient guidelines established by the Board of Education, including the guidelines for calories, fat, sugar, and sodium.

With the exception of food sold through School Sponsored Fundraisers, as prescribed below and in Policy 6-5.2 FOOD SERVICES, any foods and beverages sold to students at school during the school day other than those foods provided as part of the school meal programs shall meet the competitive food standards established in USDA-FNS Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools (Smart Snacks) rule. The school day is defined by the USDA as the period from midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day. This includes foods and beverages sold in vending machines and a la carte.

Richmond Public Schools strongly recommends that snacks, including those provided at celebrations or classroom snacks brought by staff or family members, meet or exceed the USDA-FNS Smart Snacks rule. The division also encourages before- and after-school program partners to offer snacks that meet Smart Snacks standards, with an emphasis on fruits, vegetables, whole-grains, and water as the primary beverage. The division will publish a list of Smart Snacks suggestions to parents and caregivers. Marketing of any foods and beverages on the school campus during the school day must meet the USDA-FNS Smart Snacks rule.

More information about Smart Snacks can be found via the USDA: https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school.

Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment.

Further information about policies related to school meals can be found in Policy 6-5.2 FOOD SERVICES.

School-Sponsored Fundraisers

"Fundraiser" means a school-sponsored activity where food or nonfood items are sold on the school campus during regular school hours by a school-sponsored organization to raise money for a school-related program or activity. One fundraiser is defined as one or more fundraising activities by one or more school-sponsored organizations that last one school day. If multiple school-sponsored organizations conduct fundraisers on the same day, the combined activities are counted as one fundraiser. If a fundraising activity lasts more than one school day, each subsequent day's activity is considered as one fundraiser and counts toward the total number of permitted fundraisers.

Each school may conduct thirty (30) school-sponsored fundraisers per school year during which food that does not meet the nutrition guidelines for competitive foods may be available for sale to students. Fundraisers will not be conducted during school meal service times.

Richmond Public Schools strongly recommends that school fundraisers prioritize non-food items, and schools are encouraged to promote physical activity fundraisers such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, and fun runs. Fundraisers that do include foods and beverages must meet or exceed the USDA-FNS Smart Snacks rule.

Any fundraiser that sells food or beverages may not be conducted during meal service times. This includes from 6:00 am to the end of the breakfast period and from the beginning of the first lunch period to the end of the last lunch period. Fundraisers outside of school hours, including restaurant nights, are acceptable; however, flyers and other marketing materials must promote and portray food that meets Smart Snack standards.

The school principal or school wellness designee at each school approves, tracks, and monitors fundraisers to ensure compliance with exempt school-sponsored fundraisers and compliance with Smart Snack standards.

Nutrition Education

Richmond Public Schools will provide at least 140 minutes of nutrition education to every student and meet or exceed the expectations of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Health Standards of Learning (SOLs) by integrating nutrition concepts and skills into mathematics, language arts, social science, and elective courses throughout the school year. The cafeteria environment will reinforce nutrition education provided in the classroom.

Nutrition Promotion

Richmond Public Schools will promote positive nutrition habits in the cafeteria, classrooms, and throughout the school environment. Schools may participate in nutrition promotion through farm-to-school activities, such as:

- Local foods served in school are promoted with signage and/or social media posts;
- Special events revolve around agriculture or farming;
- Career exploration, internships, and mentoring opportunities are available;
- An active school garden is operated and garden produce is offered in the cafeteria;
- A local agricultural farmer visits a school each school year; and
- Students take field trips to local agricultural farms.

The division shall promote healthy food and beverage choices by implementing Smarter Lunchroom techniques. Each school cafeteria will adopt and use at least five strategies, such as displaying whole fruits attractively, offering sliced fruit daily, placing fruits and vegetables in visible locations, using creative names for vegetables, including vegetables in grab-and-go meals, training staff to encourage healthy choices, prioritizing white milk over flavored milk, highlighting alternative entrée options, ensuring access to reimbursable meals, using student feedback for menu planning, displaying student artwork, and using announcements to promote meals.

Physical Education/Physical Activity

Richmond Public Schools will provide every student with physical education that meets or exceeds the expectations of the VDOE Physical Education SOLs and teaches the skills needed to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of personal fitness and develop the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and confidence needed to be physically active for life. A program of physical activity is provided for all students in grades kindergarten through five, consisting of at least 20 minutes per day or an average of 100 minutes per week during the school year. A program of physical activity is available to all students in grades six through 12 with a goal of at least 150 minutes per week on average during the school year.

Recess (Elementary)

All Richmond Public Schools' elementary schools' master schedule will include at least 30 minutes of recess each day.

Outdoor recess should be offered when weather allows for outdoor play, unless the temperature is below 35º F, the heat risk for Richmond is major or extreme, or there are other extreme weather conditions. For more information on HeatRisk and tracking tools, visit the CDC's NCEH (National Center for Environmental Health) resources at: https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/.

Schools should take additional precautions in spring and early summer before students have acclimated to higher temperatures, and also take into account the needs of children with asthma during periods of moderate and extreme heat.

If RPS must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students through games, stations, and cooperative play.

Each school will maintain and enforce its own written recess plan, including outdoor and indoor recess guidelines and protocols for injuries. Recess will not be a substitute for Physical Education.

Teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Schools are encouraged to limit the elimination of recess for an extended period of time for alternative instruction, programming, or testing, reserving this practice for exceptional circumstances only.

Teachers and staff are prohibited from using physical activity (e.g. pushups, running, or walking laps) as a punishment. Furthermore, withholding recess or other opportunities for physical activity as a disciplinary measure is strictly prohibited to ensure equitable access to physical and mental health benefits for all students.

Movement in the Classroom

Teachers will 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. The division will support teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, and activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Active Transportation

Richmond Public Schools will support active transport to and from school through the following:

1. Partnering with parents and neighborhood residents to identify safe or preferred walking and biking routes to school;
2. Participating in events that promote active transportation to school, such as Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day, and Walking School Buses;
3. Placing bike racks or other secure storage for bicycles and helmets at each school;
4. Providing opportunities for education on walking and bicycling safety; and
5. Participating in the Crossing Guard program to ensure that crossing guards and crosswalks are available on routes leading to schools, and ensuring comprehensive crossing guard coverage at each school.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Richmond Public Schools will cultivate school climates that support social and emotional well-being and promote positive relationships among students, staff, parents, and community members. Using the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SEL (social-emotional learning) Framework, schools will provide students with opportunities to foster development around the five core SEL competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

Promoting A Restorative and Resilient School Culture and Climate

RPS prioritizes safe, inclusive environments that foster resilience, support SEL, and promote restorative practices. Restorative Practices aim to create equitable spaces, nurture relationships, repair harm, and transform conflict. When harm occurs among students, staff, or the school community, we emphasize acknowledgment, accountability, and collaborative resolution to rebuild trust and community. Restorative strategies include integrating SEL activities (mindfulness moments, community circles) into daily routines, providing accessible mental health resources for students and staff, and addressing bullying while honoring diversity.

To support diverse student needs, mental health services will be accessible in families' native languages. School psychologists, counselors, and mental health professionals will partner with families, teachers, and community groups to ensure all students receive the necessary support. Services—such as counseling, support groups, and printed resources—will be offered in students' home languages, with translation and interpretation available as needed.

Mental Health

Mental health should be viewed as an integral component of student health. Mental health promotion and social-emotional learning should be embedded in curricula and delivered to all students in accordance with both the VDOE's 2020 Health Education Standards of Learning and § 22.1-207 of the Code of Virginia. These interventions will benefit students, families, and staff.

Richmond Public Schools will promote an inclusive culture of mental health awareness for all students. Community partnerships and community building within schools are important strategies for promoting positive mental health at RPS.

Tobacco And Nicotine Vapor Products

Richmond Public Schools is a tobacco-free school division. Smoking is prohibited in all schools. For more information regarding this prohibition, refer to policies 4-3.7, 7-3.18, and 8-3.17 on Tobacco Products and Nicotine Vapor Products.

Triennial Assessment

Richmond Public Schools will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy no less than once every three years and make the results available to the public on the school website. The assessment will include the extent to which each school is in compliance with the policy regulations, the extent to which the policy compares to a model policy, and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy. The assessment results will be used to update the Wellness Policy.

The assessment will be led by the School Nutrition Services Director, School Health Services Coordinator, and the Health and PE Director, and will include support from a liaison from the Richmond Henrico Health District, to ensure each school complies with the policy. Once complete, the school division will notify families of the availability of the triennial assessment report.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Public Law 108-265; 42 U.S.C. §§ 1752, 1758, 1759a, 1772, 1773, 1779; 7 C.F.R. 210, 220, and 245.9; Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §22.1-78, 22.1-79.7, 22.1-207.3, 22.1-207.3:1, 22.1-207.4, 22.1-275.1: Virginia Administrative Code 8 VAC 20-290-10 and 8 VAC 20-580-10 et. seq.

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