

DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

File: ADF

WELLNESS POLICY

The Dartmouth School District promotes healthy learning communities by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports an environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the health of all students through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity.

The components of a healthy school environment are:

1. A commitment to nutrition
2. Physical activity
3. Other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness

School Nutrition Environment

The Dartmouth Public Schools will ensure participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). All Dartmouth Public Schools, encompassing grades pre-K through 12, shall provide and actively promote an environment consistent with USDA, NSLP regulations and district established regulations. All cafeteria foods shall be prepared in accordance with high standard nutritional guidelines specifically oriented towards reducing the incidence of childhood obesity and Type II diabetes by eliminating the consumption of foods with "minimal nutritional value". All children shall have access to adequate and healthy foods and beverages at school, prepared and served in a safe food environment.

Everyone: parents, students, administrators, food service professionals, teachers, coaches, nurses, and the community, has a role in creating a healthy school nutrition environment. The environment is one that instructs and encourages students to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits in an effort to optimize student performance. The district is committed to nutrition that enables students, through a comprehensive curriculum to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices.

School Meals Program

Foods or beverages provided as part of the National School Breakfast Program, or the National School Lunch Program shall comply with Federal Guidelines. Nutrition services policies and guidelines for reimbursable meals shall not be more restrictive than federal and state regulations require. The district will purchase local foods and source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers where practical, when available, and when prices fall within budgetary constraints. The healthiest choices, such as salads and fruit, will be prominently displayed in the cafeterias to encourage students to make healthy choices.

Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast. All schools within the district will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program.

All school meals will feature a variety of age-appropriate healthy choices that are high quality and

DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

appealing. School meals will be prepared in a way that maximizes nutrient density and reduces fat and sodium. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to support a healthy school environment by providing a variety of nutritious foods if meals or snacks are sent from the home.

Students will have access to free, potable drinking water in each cafeteria during meal times and throughout the school day.

Competitive Foods

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages sold or provided in:

1. School cafeterias offered as a la carte items
2. School buildings, including classrooms and hallways
3. School stores
4. School snack bars
5. Vending machines (must comply 24 hours/day)
6. Concession stands
7. Booster sales
8. Fundraising activities
9. School-sponsored or school-related events
10. Any other location on school property

Competitive foods, including “a la carte offerings” to students, shall be nutritious and comply with USDA school nutrition regulations as linked and footnoted below and Commonwealth of Massachusetts school nutrition regulations as linked and footnoted below . In cases where the USDA and Massachusetts school nutrition regulations differ, the stricter standard shall be required. A comparison is linked here and footnoted below. These regulations apply to “foods and beverages sold from midnight before to 30 minutes after the official school day.”

No foods and beverages containing caffeine shall be sold or served to students at school.

Meals served through the district’s food services program shall comply with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served, as specified in 7 CFR 210.10 or 220.8, as applicable. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

Guidelines for Foods and Beverages Served or Sold

- At the elementary level, parent-provided ‘Party In A Box’, involving food will be limited to no more than four times per school year. Food free parties and celebrations will be strongly encouraged and promoted. ‘Party In A Box’ must be approved in advance by the Building Administrator. Staff members organizing parties must check with the School Nurse in advance of the event in regards to allergy awareness.
- At the secondary level, food free parties and celebrations will be strongly encouraged and promoted.
- Food as a reward is prohibited unless previously approved by administration and the school nurse.

DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

- The use of food within the curriculum or for special school events must be approved by the building principal and school nurse, and only when it has been determined that other instructional tools and accommodations cannot be substituted.
- Staff shall not provide students with food, candy or beverages.
- Dartmouth Public Schools Food Services shall provide periodic food promotion to encourage taste testing of healthy new foods being introduced on the menu.
- Schools will provide students with adequate time to eat lunch, appropriate to each age group.
- Student vending machines will be available only at the high school level.
- Schools will promote the use of non-food items for fundraising activities during the school day. In addition, all food items served or offered (for sale) to students during the school day will meet all federal, state and local standards for all nutrient and competitive food guidelines.

These guidelines have been established with the understanding that parents may communicate their own nutritional guidelines on the amounts/types of food their child may eat as medically and/or nutritionally warranted. This information should be conveyed (in writing) to the Director of Food Services, and/or their child's respective school(s) cafeteria manager.

Physical Education and Activity

Dartmouth Public Schools shall provide all students K-12 physical education that teaches them the skills needed to be physically active for a lifetime. Every effort will be made to provide physical activities that are inclusive for all students. Students will be exposed to a physical education curriculum for grades K-12 that will be aligned with the established Massachusetts standards. Waivers, exemptions or substitutions for physical education will not be granted, except to meet a student's medical or social emotional needs. Efforts will continue to be made to encourage students, community and family members to participate in physical activities together. Students will have opportunities at different learning levels to participate in physical activities after school. The school district shall provide all physical education teachers with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education/physical activity topics and competencies specifically for physical education teachers.

Recess

Students at the elementary level have a minimum of one opportunity to participate in recess daily. Students will be provided with access to safe and age appropriate equipment to utilize. It is highly recommended for teachers to allow students movement breaks throughout the day for brain health and focus. Weather permitting, every attempt will be made to provide outdoor time for students.

Health Service

Dartmouth Public School Health Service recognizes that students need to be healthy and safe in order to learn. Certified school nurses will provide comprehensive school health services to appraise, protect, and promote healthy choices that will lead to lifelong wellness practices. Health services may include emergency care, medication administration, health screenings, student and staff health education, surveillance and notification of contagious diseases, nursing case management, referrals to prevent and control disease, and referrals for counseling and access to

DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

information. The District health care delivery system and its school nurses shall provide services as required by current state and federal laws and regulations, and current District policies and act as the health liaison between students, parents/guardians, and the medical community.

Life Threatening Food Allergy Policy

The Dartmouth School Committee recognizes that students may have reactions to allergens that range from mild to severe life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. The Dartmouth School Committee also recognizes the importance for the Dartmouth School District to have a clearly defined plan relative to any allergy for students. The Administration and staff of the Dartmouth Public School (DPS) shall comply and implement protocols established to minimize the risk of exposure to allergens that pose a threat to students, plan for the individual needs of students with life-threatening food allergies, and educate all members of the school community on Life Threatening Allergies (LTA). The plans and protocols should address: (a) measures to reduce exposure to allergens; and (b) procedures to treat allergic reactions.

Part of the plans on life threatening allergies for students will aim to assist students with assuming more individual responsibility for their health and safety as they grow older and to ensure full participation in the full potential of educational programs and school sponsored activities.

An effective food allergy program needs the cooperation of parents, teachers, counselors, professional support personnel, school nutrition food service director/personnel, administrators, school nurses, school physicians, primary care physicians, extracurricular advisors, bus/transportation personnel, and any staff that might be present where children can be exposed to the food allergens that can trigger their extreme reaction.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

All District schools shall provide a school climate that values the social and emotional wellbeing of students, families and staff. This will include opportunities to develop and practice the skills needed to understand and respect the diversity of our community.

The Dartmouth Public Schools utilizes a multi-tier system of supports to provide high quality, evidence-based instruction and interventions in the core competencies of SEL including: Emotion Management, Problem Solving, and Empathy.

The District's approach to implementing SEL includes:

- Programming to develop positive, equitable, and inclusive school climates and cultures
- Direct instruction for SEL skill acquisition integrated in both unit and lesson plans for all classes.
- Appropriate integration of SEL strategies into academic work, and extracurricular activities
- Universal and Targeted interventions designed to support students in acquiring skills.

Staff Wellness

The district, in partnership with the town, provides programs promoting healthy eating, wellness and physical activity for district staff.

DARTMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Family, School and Community Partnership

Long term effective partnerships improve the planning and implementation of health promotion projects and events within each district school and throughout the community.

- Schools, supported by the district, shall actively develop and support the engagement of students, families and staff in community health enhancing activities and events at the school and throughout the community.
- The district will convene a Wellness Advisory Committee at least quarterly for this purpose.

Administrative Support

The district will provide oversight and administrative support for the implementation of this policy to include:

- Clear lines of authority and responsibility for implementation of all aspects of this policy
- Clear and open communication with school administrators to promote understanding of the policy and its requirements

SOURCE: Dartmouth Wellness Advisory Committee

LEGAL REFS.: 105 CMR 215