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# WEBSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY

## Introduction

Webster Public Schools (WPS) strives to meet the academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of all students. To accomplish this goal, the district has implemented and continues to modify a comprehensive, complete school wellness program. Components of this Wellness Policy include a nutrition program, nutrition education, wellness/physical education, and health and safety-based activities and procedures that are designed to promote student wellness in the schools.

The Webster Public School District is a CEP (Community Eligibility Provision), high needs district. All students have access to free meals during regular school hours. No student in the district shall face stigma or punishment for unpaid balances. Webster Public Schools supports a whole school health and wellness approach supporting all students and members of the school community.

## Nutrition

WPS will provide nutrition education and health promotion for grades K-12 to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating.

- Health and nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects in the broader and comprehensive curriculum.
- The district will work towards establishing linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.
- The nutrition education program shall work with the school meal program to develop and actively participant in using the cafeteria as a learning environment, such as with school gardens and local food showcases.
- Students will have opportunities to provide feedback and preferences in school meals through surveying.
- Students shall be provided with periodic food promotions and cafeteria educational opportunities such as tests of healthy new foods and/or new menu items.

## Nutrition Standards for School Meals and Other Foods and Beverages

Students at all WPS schools have access to meals served in compliance with the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. The district assures compliance with USDA nutrition standards for reimbursable school meals, and recognizes federal and state nutrition standards for all foods served in schools. More information can be found at Meals for Schools and Childcare I Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov)

- Outside of the school meal programs, no food items will be sold during the school day.
- Snacks and A la Carte items will not be sold during meal service.
- Competitive foods are not sold, offered or served in the district. If served in the District, these foods would comply with Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools and the USDA's Smart Snacks nutritional standards, whichever is stricter.
- The school day is defined as starting at midnight before and ending 30 minutes after the last bell rings.
- Fundraisers that occur during the school day should comply with the above standards.
- The district strongly discourages food being used as a reward. Non-food rewards are encouraged.
- Food should not be included or offered to students during class parties or celebrations.
- The district excludes sale of food or beverage items from vending machines during school hours and 30 minutes after school. There are currently no vending machine sales in any of the schools.
- The District Food Service Program will make every effort to accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings adequate time for students to eat.
- All meals available at WPS during school hours will comply with the current USDA Federal School Guidelines as well as the district's Life-Threatening Allergy Policy.
- Only state certified "smart snacks" will be offered during school hours, and at after school run programs. A link to the Smart Snacks website is posted on the WPS website and at USDA's Smart Snacks nutritional standards
- Smart snacks and healthy options will also be encouraged for after school hours and events including limited to sporting events, family connection events, and school dances.

- Fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices will be promoted.
- School meals will include and promote fresh, locally grown foods in school meal service from farms, food hubs, and other local food sources supporting sustainable practices and healthy eating regularly throughout each month of the school year.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise).
- Schools will make available plain potable water to all students and staff during the day without charge. The use of personal water bottles will be permitted throughout the day where appropriate.
- A minimum of 20 minutes will be allowed for students to eat meals in adequate lunchroom facilities.
- Students are able to purchase an additional lunch for the price of $3.00.
- Any unpaid balances on student lunch accounts will be addressed with the parent/guardian in a respectful and private manner. The privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch will remain protected in all aspects, and only discussed with parents/guardians if this information is requested.
- All WPS cafeterias are cashless for student payments and each student has a unique id code for privacy in transactions. Teachers and adult staff may purchase lunches at the current price with cash, check, or on account.

**Food & Beverage Safety**

- Seek to have a minimum of 2 health inspections from the Webster Board of Health at all schools in the district.
- Food service staff is trained in food safety, handling, and USDA school food requirements upon hire and annually. Staff members will meet mandated training requirements for professional development each school year.
- Food quality measurements and procedures are followed during all meal services, including temperature monitoring and allergen safety.
- Staff has to sign off on the Policies and Procedures handbook annually.
- Food Allergies
  - Continue to follow the school committee approved Life Threatening Allergy Policy. (LTA Policy Link)
  - Accommodations will be made for food restrictions.
  - WPS kitchens are nut free kitchens. No nut products or products produced in a nut containing factory are served at WPS.

**Physical Education and Physical Activity**

- Physical education and physical activity opportunities are essential components of maintaining health, academic success, and the development of lifelong wellness practices. Our district is committed to a physical education, health and wellness program that is designed help establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. It will account for and respects all students' needs and abilities.
- The district will offer a sequential K-12 program of physical education and wellness education that provides moderate to vigorous physical activity, and is taught by a certified Physical Education and/or Wellness Teacher.
- The physical education curriculum for Grades K-12 is aligned with national and/or state physical education standards and strives to promote an active lifestyle. It will emphasize the connection between physical fitness and all components of wellness that reduce the risk of disease and influences lifelong health.
- The curriculum meets the National Association for Sport and Physical Education National Standards and/or the Massachusetts State Comprehensive Health Standards.
- Physical education will be complemented through classroom knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.
- During the school day, PE class time for elementary students will aim to be a minimum of 45"/ week, middle school students a minimum of 45"/week and high school students will meet the required PE credits to meet graduation requirements.
- All students will receive physical education/wellness instruction taught by a certified physical education/wellness teacher.
- PE teachers will be provided with annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education/physical activity topics and competencies specifically for physical education teachers.
- The physical education curriculum will follow a formally established periodic review cycle congruent to other academic subjects. Students will have the opportunity to be physically active on a regular basis.
- WPS shall provide additional physical activity opportunities through daily, supervised recess (minimum of 15 minutes) in elementary schools and before and after school sponsored programs (intramural and interscholastic sports programs) in the secondary schools.
- WPS encourages physical activity as a reward incentive during the school day. It will not serve as a form of punishment and shall not be withheld as punishment.
- All elementary students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess.
- WPS invites and encourages community and family engagement in recreational physical activity as well as organized sports and other offerings.
- WPS will develop joint-use agreements with community partners in order to provide expanded physical activity opportunities for all students and community members. WPS will promote safe walking and biking to school.

## Wellness Promotion and Marketing

- All school staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.
- WPS will offer services through an Employee Assistance Program to all staff.
- Employee Wellness will be encouraged through the EAP and other activities that the district offers. Activity programs and physical activity programs will be available for staff. Students and staff feedbackand suggestions around school meal service is greatly encouraged.
- All school-based marketing shall be consistent with Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
- Marketing of foods served at school will include nutritional meal promotion, sign components and socialmedia posts. WPS will not expose students to branded and/or unhealthy food marketing of any way.
- All school property including educational materials and media that will be free of brand names/ logos andillustrations of unhealthy foods. The advertising of food and beverages that are not available for sale indistrict schools will not be advertised on any school property.
- Schools will not participate in incentive programs and avoid participating in promotions that go againstschool policy.
- WPS promotes environmentally-friendly practices such as participation in Farm to School programs andother procurement of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and nondisposable tableware.
- Recycling and composting programs will be developed and implemented whenever possible. School meals will include fresh and local foods whenever possible.

## Other School Based Wellness Activities

- Aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by staff and students.
- Support the development and implementation of after school programming for students and parentsto educate nutrition guidelines and meal preparation.
- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs designated to benefit staff health will be considered and, to the extent practical, implemented. Life Skills program participation will be considered and, to the extent practical, implemented.
- Mindfulness programs will be explored, developed and implemented whenever possible.

**Implementation, Evaluation and Communication**

- School stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the development, implementation, review, and update of the wellness policy.
- The School Wellness Committee will consist of stakeholders representing the schools and community, including parents, students, and representatives from the Food Service Department, members of the School Committee, school administrators, teachers health professionals, and members of the community.
- The School Wellness Committee will report to the School Committee annually, and will meet at a minimum four times per year.
- Core Wellness Committee members including health, wellness and nutrition professionals alongside the Superintendent and Business Manager ensure school wide and school level compliance.
- The Wellness Committee will develop plans for policy implementations at school levels. In each school, the building administrator shall ensure compliance.
- The district plans to continue policy and committees at the school building level for compliance.
- The Wellness Policy is made available to the public on the district website, or it can be requested in written form from the Central Office. All meeting notes are available on the district website.
- WPS will promote the wellness policy to faculty, staff, parents and students.
- Continual assessment of the Wellness Policy regularly, and a policy review and revision will be done every three years. Revisions will be made and updated accordingly.
- The triennial progress report which will assess the written policy content compared to model wellness policies and regulations. It will also assess implementation of policy goals compared to national recommendations. Updates will be made accordingly. Any and all the findings will be posted on the district website
- The School Wellness Committee will act as a resource to individual schools for implementing these guidelines

School Committee reading and approval on August 20, 2024
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