

Bentonia Gibbs Elementary School School Wellness Policy

2025-2026



BOARD APPROVED
10.07.2025
YAZOO COUNTY SCHOOLS

BENTONIA GIBBS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Health Council

Alyson White Wellness Coordinator

Janice Pelison–Cafeteria Manager

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Wellness Meeting Dates

July 22, 2025

October 6, 2025

January 5, 2026

School Wellness Policy

Rationale:

The link between the health of students and learning is well documented. If children are to be successful in school they cannot be tired, hungry, sick, suffering from drug abuse, or worried that school is an unsafe environment in which they could become a victim of a violent act. It has become apparent that problems such as poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, substance abuse, depression, teen pregnancy, obesity, bullying, and more – can adversely affect not only a child’s health, but also his or her *ability to learn!* And that is precisely why a coordinated approach to school health can make a difference! A coordinated approach to school health improves kids’ health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, schools, and communities working together. At its very core, a coordinated approach to school health is about keeping students healthy over time, reinforcing positive healthy behaviors throughout the school day, and making it clear that *good health and learning go hand in hand.*

Goal:

All students in Bentonia-Gibbs School shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices that promote healthy lifestyles. All staff in Bentonia-Gibbs School is encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Bentonia-Gibbs School adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to implementing a coordinated approach to school health. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Commitment to Nutrition

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Offer school breakfast with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Promote participation in school meal programs to families and staff. Staff will be encouraged to create personal meal accounts so that funds are readily available to purchase meals.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school food service staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2001).
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2002). Staff only vending machines will be clearly marked. All staff vending machines will comply with the 50% healthy foods guidelines according to Smart Snack Regulations. Student vending machines will offer only healthy choice options as defined by nutrition standards.
- Implement Nutrition Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act
 - Healthy food and beverage choices;
 - Healthy food preparation;
 - Marketing of healthy food choices to students and staff;
 - Food preparation ingredients and products;
 - Minimum/maximum time allotted for students and staff lunch and breakfast;
 - Availability of food items during the lunch and breakfast periods of the Child Nutrition Breakfast and Lunch Programs;
 - Methods to increase participation in the Child Nutrition School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.
- Establish guidelines in accordance with the Mississippi Beverage and Snack Regulations for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Encourage students to make food choices based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, by emphasizing menu options that feature baked (rather than fried foods), whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Add nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, trail mix, beef jerky, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice, and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered at school, including vending machines, school stores, concession stands at sporting and academic events, parties, celebrations, social events, and other school functions.

- Make school meals accessible to all students with a variety of delivery strategies, such as breakfast in the classroom and lunch in the classroom.

Commitment to Food Safe Schools

The Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Implement a food safety program based on HACCP principles for all school meals, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs and ensure that the food service permit is current for the school site.
- Develop a food safety education plan for all staff and students, consistent with Fight Bac® (www.fightbac.org) and other national standards for safe food handling at home and in school.
- Ensure that all staff have viewed the video developed by the Office of Healthy Schools to support food safety on the school campus. For compliance with the Nutrition Standards all staff must complete and sign pre and post tests developed by the Office of Healthy Schools and maintain documentation of completion.
- All school personnel (school board members, administrators, teachers, school nurses, instructional and health services paraprofessionals, foodservice staff, custodians and facilities managers, and administrative support staff) will receive copies of the Local School Wellness Policy to include food safety policies and procedures and relevant professional development. Examples of professional development include, but are not limited to, the resources developed by the Office of Healthy Schools and *Eating Safely at School*
- Adequate access to hand washing facilities and supplies will be available whenever and wherever students, staff, and families prepare, handle, or consume food.
- The food safety assurance plan must address strategies that minimize risks for students and staff who have food allergies and intolerances. Parents are asked to provide information on food allergies and intolerances during registration or at any subsequent time when they may be identified. The school nurse reviews records and compiles a list of those students affected which is then provided to the cafeteria manager, the teachers, and the administration. Students are offered alternate menu choices when foods are served that may trigger an allergy or intolerance.
- The food safety assurance plan must address strategies that minimize risks for students and staff who have food allergies and intolerances.

Commitment to Physical Activity/Physical Education

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Provide 150 minutes per week of activity-based instruction for all students in grades K-5 (in accordance with Section 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972, ann., reference 2004 Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standards 32, Appendix B and 33).
- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Offer instructions based on the 2013-2014 Mississippi Physical Education Framework.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).
- Incorporate 5- to 10-minute physical activity sessions in classrooms to teach subject areas and to make transitions between different lessons (Examples can be found at www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html). Teachers are primarily using Move to Learn and GoNoodle.

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007, which requires 45 minutes per week of health education instruction as defined by the State Board of Education for grades K through 6. Science teachers will integrate one period of instruction per week dedicated to health education.
- Instruction must be based on the Mississippi Contemporary Health for grades K-8.

Commitment to a Healthy School Environment

The Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Ensure that there are no pad locks or chains on exit doors; exits should never be obstructed (in accordance with Mississippi State Fire Code). Ensure that all exit signs are illuminated and clearly visible. Room capacity will be clearly marked in the cafeteria and gym.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet).
- Refer to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's Handbook for Public Playground Safety; for federal guidelines for playground safety.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Complete yearly maintenance of the heating and cooling system in your school; check coils, filters, belts, etc. in order to maintain safe operation and healthy air quality.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.
- Have an anti-bullying policy that outlines procedures for dealing with bullying situations in the school.
- Ensure that two means of egress are available in each classroom in case of an emergency; if there is only one door, designate a window (properly sized) as a means of egress.
- Comply with the applicable rules and regulations of the State Board of Education in the operation of its transportation program (in accordance with the MS Code 37-41-53; State Board of Education Policies 7903, 7904, and 7909; and Accreditation Standard #35).
- Inspect all buses on a quarterly basis and ensure that they are well maintained and clean.
- Require that all bus drivers have a valid bus driver certificate and a commercial driver's license and operate the bus according to all specified safety procedures. Maintain a record of yearly motor vehicle reports on each bus driver and evidence that each driver has received two hours of in-service training per semester. (SB Policy 7903)
- Conduct bus evacuation drills at least two times each year.
- Provide facilities that are clean.
- Provide facilities that are safe.
- Provide proper signage that explains tobacco, weapons, and drugs are prohibited on the school campus and at school functions. *Signs updated and/or replaced BY August, 2019.*
- Provide operational facilities that are equipped and functional to meet the instructional needs of students and staff (in accordance with the Mississippi School Design Guidelines found at www.silo.tips.com).
- Provide air conditioning in all classrooms, Code §37-17-6(2) (2000). To accommodate physical education, an air conditioned classroom will be assigned in addition to the gym.

Comply with the requirements for Safe and Healthy Schools:

- Maintain a comprehensive School Safety Plan on file that has been approved annually by the local school board. (MS Code 37-3-81 and 37-3-82(2); and Accreditation Standard #37.1); see the School Safety Manual and the MDE School Occupational Safety and Crisis

Response Plan.

- State Board Policy EBB (1990) prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms or weapons by any person on school premises or at school functions. Code §37-11-18 (1996) requires any student who possesses a knife, a handgun, other firearm or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm or who commits a violent act on educational property may be subject to automatic expulsion for one calendar year. The superintendent of the school is authorized to modify the period of time for expulsion on a case-by-case basis.
- Prohibits students from possessing tobacco on any educational property, Criminal Code §97-32-9 (2000). Code §97-32-29 (2000) further prohibits the use of tobacco on any educational property for adults who, if in violation, would be subject to a fine and issued a citation by a law enforcement officer. Educational property is defined as any public school building or bus, campus, grounds, athletic field, or other property used or operated during a school-related activity.
- Hire a full time school security/ safety officer.
- Conduct a minimum of one scheduled meeting per semester with the School Health Council to determine and discuss the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges associated with implementing and maintaining our school's healthy and safe environment.

Commitment to Quality Health Services

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Ensure all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care*.
- Provide for teachers and staff training regarding signs and symptoms of asthma. (SB 2393)
- Ensure that every child who has been diagnosed with asthma has an asthma action plan or medical form (with dosage) completed by a physician in the school office.
- Know the district anaphylaxis policy. Providing training by a healthcare professional, preferably a school nurse, for the individuals that will be responsible for implementing the policy at the school site. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37)
- The school nurse should submit health services data on the 15th of each month for the previous month to the Office of Healthy Schools.
- The school nurse will attend at least one MDE sponsored training each school year.
- Offer comprehensive health services for students in grades k-6, through the employment of a school nurse, as a means to academic success.
- Optimize the provision of health services with a school nurse-to-student ratio on 1:750 for students in the general population.

Commitment to Providing Counseling, Psychological and Social Services

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Adhere to the details outlined in the Licensure Guidelines (451) when hiring guidance counselors and psychologists. The state does not have a policy specifically outlining the requirements for a school social worker. For licensure as a social worker in the state of Mississippi, a candidate must: provide verification of a baccalaureate degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and scores a minimum of 70 on the ASWB basic exam.
- Abide by Mississippi Code 37-9-79 (Amended 2014) as the school provides counseling and guidance for students.
- Ensure that all elementary school students have access to qualified student support personnel such as: guidance counselors, social workers, nurses, psychologists, psychometrists, and others (as required by the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards, Process Standards 6.1 and 6.2).
- Hire school guidance counselors with a minimum of a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development.
- Hire school counselors who agree to abide by the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics.
- Ensure that all school guidance counselors provide comprehensive counseling services such as:
 - Academic and personal/social counseling.
 - Student assessment and assessment counseling.
 - Individual and group counseling.
 - Crisis intervention and preventive counseling.
 - Referrals to community agencies.
 - Educational consultations and collaborations with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders.
 - Follow-up counseling services.
 - Conflict resolution.
 - Other counseling duties or other duties as assigned by the school principal.
 - Provide teachers and administrators with health education on the topic of suicide prevention according to SB 2770.

Offer counseling, interventions and other mental health services, as well as referrals

to community health professionals.

- Hire a qualified counselor who will address mental health, and academic needs of students in the school setting.
- Implementation of Social and Emotional learning curriculum into activity schedule.
- Professional development for the Social Emotional Health of teachers will be implemented monthly.

Commitment to Family and Community Involvement

The Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Invite parents and community members to participate in school health planning by serving on the local School Health Council via virtual.
- Invite family or community members to eat a meal at school pending the improvement of health conditions.
- Increase PTO Membership by offering varied meeting times and attaching activities to meeting times.
- Encourage regular family mealtimes that include healthy choices.

Commitment to Implementing a Quality Staff Wellness Program

The Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Mississippi State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan that has been enhanced to include *Motivating Mississippi: Keys to Living Healthy*, a new wellness and health promotion program designed to help individuals live a healthy lifestyle and increase their overall wellness benefit amount.
- Encourage after school health and fitness sessions for school staff.
- Establish physical activity opportunities for staff. Explore community options for offering onsite yoga/ exercise classes for staff. Staff will be offered the opportunity to participate in a voluntary team-based competition modeled after "The Biggest Loser" with semester incentives for success.
- Provide staff with information about Weight Watchers as offered through a partnership with Blue Cross/ Blue Shield.
- Provide staff with information about the Naturally Slim program as offered through our partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield.
- Share information about local fitness-oriented opportunities throughout the community.

Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Provide positive, consistent, and motivating messages about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting.
- Involve students in the local school health council for planning and marketing school health messages throughout the school.
- Eliminate advertising or promoting unhealthy food choices on the school campus.

Commitment to Implementation

Bentonia-Gibbs School will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more persons to ensure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.
- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy (Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Section 37-13-134).
- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.
- Offer Paw Bucks to students who are seen making healthy choices.