

File: ADF

SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS PROGRAM

Wellness Committee

The school district will establish a wellness committee that consists of at least one (1): parent, student, community partner, nurse, school food service representative, teacher, school administrator, and district administrator. The Superintendent, or designee, will serve the district as the Wellness Program Coordinator. Only employees of the district who are members of the wellness committee may serve as wellness program coordinators.

Section 1 - Nutrition Education

Avon Public Schools teach, encourage, and support healthy lifestyles of students. Students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of nutrition education learning experiences in their health courses, in the general curriculum (when appropriate), and in the cafeteria. Nutrition education lessons teach the skills students need to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors and nutritious food choices. Nutrition education is age-appropriate based on the Massachusetts Health Education Curriculum Framework Standards and USDA guidelines. The entire school environment will deliver aligned messaging to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. The intention of school messaging and education will be to:

- promote fruit, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices
- include access to valid health information and health- promoting products and services
- include use of interpersonal communication skills, goal-setting, decision making, and self-management skills to enhance health
- include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory activities for students

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The District will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain

- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Section 2 - Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals

Setting USDA Child Nutrition Standards and School Meals Goals

Meals served through the district's Food Service Program will comply with the national school lunch and 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. All schools will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program.

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children
- provide free potable water during meals and throughout the day
- be served in clean and pleasant settings
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations, as documented

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) & School Breakfast Program

(SBG): <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

The school district will send home information regarding income eligibility for the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program. Information packets will be distributed at the beginning of the year and as students enroll.

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:

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

Free and Reduced-priced Meals: Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Employees will be aware that it is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or “paid” meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling

Schools:

- Should try to schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11am and 1pm
- Schools should offer seat time of no less than 10 minutes for breakfast and 30 minutes for lunch
- Should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities; will provide students with ample time to eat breakfast and lunch
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks
- Should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district’s responsibility to operate a food service program, the schools will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Avon Food Service Staff will adhere to the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professional development in addition to local and state requirements.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages: With concerns about food allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets, the building principal, assistant principal, and/or designees will promote a "No Food Trading" and "No Utensil Sharing" standard in all schools with particular focus at the elementary school level.

Avon Food Service (AFS) may engage students, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, AFS should make available information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Section 3 - Nutrition Standards

All competitive foods sold during the school day will comply with the Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages and USDA Smart Snacks, whichever is more restrictive. Competitive foods can include: i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc. The school day is defined as midnight to 30 minutes after the final bell of the school day.

Smart Snacks In Schools:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school>

Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/105-cmr-225-nutrition-standards-for-competitive-foods-and-beverages-in-public-schools/download>

Grades PreK-5. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Products & Produce: When able schools will always select local products and produce over other domestic items. Avon will participate in the Department of Defense Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program to supplement the purchase of fresh produce.

Vending Machines: Vending machines must comply with Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Food and Beverages and USDA Smart Snacks 24/7, regardless of the machine being on or off.

Rewards: Schools will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP), and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations: Due to the increase in medical conditions with diagnoses related to food intake and the increase in the variety of foods with the potential for an allergic response, student celebrations that occur during the school day will no longer include any foods or food products without prior approval from the building administrator and the school nurse. Classroom, grade and seasonal celebrations will no longer include food without prior approval from the building administrator and the school nurse. Alternative recommendations will be available to parents and teachers when requested.

Fundraisers/Events: For all other school related events (i.e. after school community events, fundraisers, and faculty events) the emphasis should be on foods from the four food groups (proteins, breads/cereals/grains, fruit/vegetables, and dairy products). An emphasis should be considered on increasing the servings of complex carbohydrates, low fat choices of protein foods and controlling the amount of fat (especially saturated fat), sugars, salt, and other non-nutritious foods and beverages. All school fundraisers shall be signed off by the principal of the building. As referenced in the September 2023 memo from the Department of Public Health, no competitive food based fundraisers will be held during the school day. Schools should avoid participating in fundraisers or corporate incentive programs that promote a message inconsistent with the goals of a healthy school community. Link to memo here: https://mcusercontent.com/d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a/files/f93d4749-5ecd-3681-0841-10ae641217f5/MA_Competitive_Foods_Memo_September_2023.pdf

Section 4 - Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical Education Program:

The physical education program shall be designed to highlight physical fitness and encourage healthy, active lifestyles. The physical education program shall consist of physical activities of at least moderate intensity and for a duration that is sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students, subject to the differing abilities of students. Students shall be exposed to a wide array of different physical activities and sports to help broaden their exposure.

- The school district's comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum identifies the progression of skill development in grades K-12. The physical education curriculum for grades K-12 will be aligned with the Massachusetts standards.
- Avon Public Schools will provide all students physical education that teaches skills needed to be lifelong learners of health and fitness.
- Physical Education courses will be taught by highly trained and licensed educators in Physical Education and Health.
- Avon Public Schools provides our highly qualified educators professional development opportunities to grow in their discipline.
- Avon Public Schools provides a Safe Route to School for students who live in the town of Avon.

- Avon School District shall work with community partners to provide after school programs.

Physical Activity Program:

Physical activity during the school day - Schools will promote an environment supportive of physical activity. Students will be given opportunities for physical activity such as recess periods, physical education (P.E.) classes, and physical activity programs.

- Physical education looks different at different grade levels. Every effort will be made to provide physical fitness activities that are inclusive of all students.
- At elementary school students shall receive weekly physical education instruction throughout the school year that teaches skills for lifelong physical fitness.
- Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, the middle school will have physical education offered weekly throughout the school year.
- At the high school level, students will have a semester of physical education each year.
- Avon Public Schools are not exempt from the required physical education class time or credit unless the student has medical or social-emotional needs. In this situation a principal, or designee, may determine their need for exemption with appropriate documentation.
- In addition to regular athletic programming sponsored by AMHS, every effort will be made to provide physical activity options within clubs and intramurals during after-school hours.
- Avon Public Schools shall provide daily recess to all elementary school students.

Section 5 - Wellness Promotion and Marketing

Avon Public Schools recognizes that the images and promotions of unhealthy foods and beverages are inconsistent with our general wellness policy and our efforts to promote healthy choices by our students.

Staff members in the Avon Public Schools are encouraged to model healthy eating habits as well as exercise and physical activity behaviors.

The Avon Public Schools values the health and wellbeing of every staff member and plans and implements activities that support personal efforts by staff members to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff members in the Avon Public Schools will be provided access to an array of programming and resources on topics including nutrition, exercise, emotional wellness and self-care through a partnership with MIIA and additional resources including confidential counseling from the Employees Assistance Program.

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Physical activity should be an integral part of the school day. Teachers may use extra physical activity as a reward for academic achievement or good behavior. Staff members shall not use physical activity as a punishment (for example, running laps, requiring sit-ups or push-ups). Staff members shall not withhold physical activity, including recess or physical education class, as a punishment or for a time to make it academic work.

Marketing on school campus will meet the Smart Snacks in Schools standards. This includes logos and brand names on vending machines, books, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, and sports equipment.

Schools should avoid educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward as well as programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low nutritional food products. It is our objective to promote healthy foods and beverages both through the elimination of materials that promote unhealthy foods as well as actively marketing the healthy items that are offered.

This may be done through enticing language, colorful menus, coupons, signage, student suggestions and other marketing techniques.

Marketing for foods and beverages can be seen in schools on posters, the fronts of vending machines, textbook covers, and scoreboards. The Avon Public Schools are committed to policies and practices that promote foods and beverages that support healthy diets (fruits and vegetables, plain water). The schools can help students make healthy choices by marketing and promoting healthful foods and beverages. Some low-cost strategies may include:

- Collecting suggestions from students and families for meals and snack items that might be offered.
- Gathering feedback on new menu items
- Placing nutritious items where they are easy for students to select (placing fruits and vegetables to the front of the school meal line or near the cash register).
- Using attractive displays for fruits and vegetables (fruit basket).
- Pricing nutritious foods and beverages at a lower cost, while increasing the price of less nutritious foods and beverages.
- Using signs or verbal prompts to encourage students to try healthy foods. (CDC)
- Provide nutrition education to parents beginning at the elementary level with the goal to continue to educate parents throughout middle and high school levels.
- The nutrition education will be provided in the form of postings of the website and any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.
- Provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion with staff with the purpose of:
 - Encouraging all school staff, support staff and administrators to improve their own personal health and wellness.
 - Creating positive role models and improving staff morale.
 - Building the commitment of staff to promote health, improve nutrition, and encourage physical activity.
 - Promote and market healthy selections of foods and beverages to all students

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and staff, including those sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs, such as through a la carte, vending machines, fundraising events, concessions, catering and student stores.

- Community Connections – School personnel will strive to establish relationships among families, members of the school community, and of the greater Avon community in order to identify and facilitate access to available wellness resources.

Section 6 - Implementation, Evaluation, Communication

An Avon Public Schools Wellness Committee will continue to be formed annually to assist in the development, implementation and monitoring of the Wellness Policy. The Wellness Committee may be composed of representatives of district and school administrators, teachers, community members, health professionals, a representative of Avon's food service department, parents and students.

The Wellness Committee will meet four times a year and official minutes will be kept. Members of the Wellness Committee will be appointed by the Superintendent of Schools, or designee.

The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure compliance with established district wide wellness policy. In each school, the building administrator or designee shall ensure compliance.

The Wellness Committee will establish measurable goals and objectives based on review of public health data as well as input from school staff and the community as a whole.

At least one staff member from each school should serve on the District Wellness Committee and ensure that there is ongoing communication at the building level.

Every three years members of the Wellness Committee will assess the implementation of the Wellness Policy using the WellSAT:3.0 tool or other equivalent assessment. The committee will work to update the policy as a result of this assessment as needed. The results of this assessment will be available to the public. The Wellness Policy is made available to the public on the district website.

