

Ardsley School District Wellness Plan

Reference: [Wellness Policy 5661](#)

Purpose and Guiding Framework

This plan supports the implementation of District Wellness Policy 5661 through coordinated actions that promote student health, well-being, and academic success. It is grounded in the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation best practices, and the NYS Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks.

All actions reflect the District's commitment to cultivating environments where students and staff can thrive physically, socially, and emotionally.

Vision

Ardsley School District is dedicated to sustaining an inclusive learning environment that empowers all students and staff—of all abilities, backgrounds, and needs—to reach their full potential in all areas of life: academic, social, and personal. This commitment extends beyond the instructional day, across all settings on and off campus, and throughout the K-12 journey and beyond.

For students to thrive academically, personally, and socially, they must have equitable access to a comprehensive wellness program that recognizes, develops, and accommodates diverse experiences, abilities, and habits. This program cultivates the integral connection between education, hands-on experiences, support services, and resources that promote well-being, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, digital wellness, social connections, emotional resilience, and adaptive supports for diverse needs.

By prioritizing a health-promoting environment that reflects and respects the diversity of our community, we can partner with families, students, staff, and the broader community to ensure that all students develop the knowledge, skills, and habits needed to care for their minds, bodies, and relationships. Through the promotion of inclusive, sustainable, and community-driven wellness practices, we aim to foster healthful lifestyles, well-being, and academic excellence, empowering students to thrive not only during their time in Ardsley schools but long after they graduate.

Guiding Principles

In our efforts to support student success and foster a thriving school community, the District recognizes the need to go beyond traditional definitions of health and wellness. We aim to nurture the holistic well-being of all students, staff, and community members. This section outlines key terms and concepts that guide our approach.

1. **Healthy Students, Healthful Environments.** We believe that a truly healthy school environment supports not only the physical health of students but also their emotional, mental, and social well-being. A healthful environment is one that promotes beneficial conditions, including access to nutritious food, safe spaces for physical activity, and opportunities for positive social interactions. We focus on creating inclusive practices that respect and accommodate various dietary needs.

2. **Community-Sustained Access and Practices.** Our vision extends beyond just providing access during the school day. We are committed to sustaining wellness practices that involve the entire community—students, staff, families, and local organizations. This approach encourages long-term habits that support not only personal well-being but also a sense of shared responsibility for the overall health of the community.
3. **Agency for Life.** We emphasize empowering individuals to make informed choices about their own well-being, rather than simply offering access during the instructional day or on school grounds. Agency refers to the ability to act independently and make choices that affect one’s life. Our wellness practices aim to support this sense of agency, allowing all community members to participate actively in shaping a culture of wellness, whether by modeling healthy behaviors or supporting others in making informed decisions. We do not seek to limit choices, but rather to offer diverse opportunities for personal and collective empowerment.
4. **Well-Being.** Well-being is a broad, holistic concept that includes not just physical health, but emotional, mental, and social health as well. Unlike health, which is commonly understood as the absence of illness or disease, well-being refers to a positive state of flourishing, encompassing a person’s overall sense of happiness, purpose, and connection with others.

By integrating these principles, the District aims to create a school culture that fosters not only academic success but also the growth of well-rounded, confident individuals who are empowered to make informed, healthy choices for themselves and their communities.

1. Governance and Leadership

Philosophy

Effective wellness implementation begins with shared leadership and collaboration. A representative District Wellness Committee ensures that diverse perspectives inform policies and programs that advance whole-child well-being.

Implementation Actions

- Maintain a District Wellness Committee that meets regularly to oversee policy implementation, review progress, and recommend improvements sourced from community feedback (solicited by survey and conversation) and wellness research updates.
- District Wellness Committee to review relevant available disaggregated data (by demographic groups) annually to identify and prioritize interventions for any student populations experiencing disproportionate wellness challenges or lack of access to resources.
- Review the Wellness Policy annually to ensure ongoing compliance with federal and state regulations.
- Designate and publicly identify the District Wellness Coordinator.
- Document meeting minutes, agendas, and participation for transparency.
- Increase student representation and leadership in building and district wellness initiatives and planning committees.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- The Wellness Committee meets at least quarterly with documented minutes.
- Wellness Coordinator role maintained and posted publicly.
- Annual policy review and brief summary shared with the Board and community.
- Publicly distribute and review results to any community feedback/surveys.
- Adding accessible meeting options for students to effectively participate in wellness initiatives and leadership.

2. Implementation Planning, Monitoring, and Accountability

Philosophy

Monitoring progress ensures that wellness goals remain active and relevant, fostering accountability and continuous improvement across all schools.

Implementation Actions

- Develop and maintain a districtwide implementation plan that outlines key focus areas (nutrition, physical activity, SEL, mental health, and staff wellness).
- Identify areas of developmentally appropriate needs relative to each school level. These needs should be identified by individuals representing the following: mental health, administration, student (MS/HS), technology or curriculum educators, physical education/health department.
- Conduct an annual review using a recognized wellness assessment tool such as the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Assessment.
- Complete and publish the federally required triennial assessment of Wellness Policy implementation by the end of June (2026, 2029, etc.).

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Annual wellness assessment completed by the end of June each year.
 - Wellness committee does initial assessment around wellness week to see where we are in terms of the wellness plan
- Triennial assessment completed and results posted publicly:
<https://www.cn.nysed.gov/sites/cn/files/nyslswpassessmenttool.pdf>

3. School Meals, Nutrition Standards, and Food Service

Philosophy

Access to nutritious, appealing meals and accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs supports student readiness to learn and fosters lifelong healthy eating habits.

Ardsley's philosophy includes meeting daily nutritional needs. If a schedule is modified so that lunchtime is sacrificed for a class or service, Ardsley will engage in family education, providing alternatives, and ask for informed active parental consent. This allows for the school to maintain its philosophy.

Implementation Actions

- Educate families on the importance of mealtime before, during, and after the school day and solicit support for community-wide education from community organizations such as PTOs.
- Ensure all meals comply with federal and state nutrition standards.
- Provide clear and accessible information about menus, nutrition content, and allergens.
- Collect feedback from students in grades 4–12 at least once per year to improve menu options.
 - Ask the school nutrition committee to help create a survey short and simple but can have at least one question for students to share a meal that hasn't been offered during lunch.
- Streamline the process for applying for meal accommodations and special dietary needs, ensuring the process is clearly communicated to all families.
- Ensure that the process for students receiving free lunch is clear and accessible to all.
- Accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Provide alternative locations for students to spend their lunch periods due to religious obligations (such as fasting), prioritizing student comfort and giving student choice when possible.
- Implement procedures to address unpaid meal charges in a way that does not stigmatize, distress, or embarrass students.
- Integrate current research-backed nutrition education within the comprehensive health education curriculum and other instructional areas, K-12, focusing on skills like using food labels and critically evaluating nutrition misinformation.
- Prohibit the use of withholding of food/beverages as a punishment under any circumstance.
- Provide staff with a list of alternative, non-food-based rewards, and encourage non-food-based rewards. When using food as part of a classroom activity, offer an inclusive option to meet any restriction that may exist in the classroom (i.e., if in a classroom with a peanut allergy, offer a sunflower butter instead; if there is a vegetarian in the classroom, offer all students a vegetarian option to select).

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Menu compliance with federal nutrition standards verified annually.
- Student feedback collected once a year minimum.
- Positive trend in student meal participation rates.

4. Water Access

Philosophy

Readily available, safe drinking water supports hydration, health, and student performance throughout the school day.

Implementation Actions

- Provide free, safe drinking water in all food service areas and throughout school facilities.
- Regularly inspect and maintain water stations to ensure functionality and cleanliness.

- Communicate water access locations to staff and students.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Functional water stations available in key areas.
- Annual maintenance check completed.
- Staff and student surveys reflect awareness of water access.

5. Foods and Beverages Provided but Not Sold / Competitive Foods and Fundraising

Philosophy

Students' daily food choices should consistently reinforce health-promoting messages taught in the classroom and modeled across the school environment.

Implementation Actions

- Ensure all foods and beverages sold or provided during the school day meet Smart Snacks in School standards.
- Communicate guidelines for classroom celebrations, rewards, and fundraising activities.
- Offer resources for non-food-based celebrations and recognition.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Annual review of food and beverage compliance with Smart Snacks standards.
- Staff and families receive clear guidance each school year.
- Observation of consistent alignment between policy and practice at school events.

6. Food and Beverage Marketing

Philosophy

Marketing within schools should promote only products that support healthy choices and align with the district's nutrition goals.

Implementation Actions

- Ensure that all marketing on school property, including signage, vending, and materials, promotes foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks standards.
- Remove or replace outdated or noncompliant marketing materials as identified.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Annual visual audit of marketing materials completed.
- 100% of school-based marketing materials align with nutrition standards.

7. Nutrition Education and Promotion

Philosophy

Nutrition education empowers students to make informed, lifelong choices about food and wellness, fostering both knowledge and healthy habits.

Implementation Actions

- Integrate nutrition education into health, science, and other appropriate curricula in accordance with NYS learning standards.
- Use classroom lessons, cafeteria promotions, and school events to reinforce positive messages about healthy eating.
- Engage families with accessible information about nutrition and wellness initiatives.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Nutrition education included in curriculum maps or lesson plans.
- At least one annual schoolwide or districtwide event promotes healthy eating.
- Positive student feedback on nutrition awareness surveys.

8. Physical Activity and Physical Education

Philosophy

Regular physical activity is essential to student health, focus, and academic success. Schools play a vital role in ensuring all students have opportunities to be active daily.

Implementation Actions

- Provide physical education taught by certified PE teachers aligned to state and SHAPE America standards.
- Offer daily recess for elementary and middle school students that promotes active play and is not withheld for disciplinary reasons.
- Encourage classroom-based physical activity breaks to reduce sedentary time.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- PE and recess scheduled consistently across all grades.
- Annual review confirms compliance with required PE minutes and recess expectations.
- Staff feedback indicates increased integration of classroom movement breaks.

9. Mental Health and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Philosophy

Supporting students' emotional well-being and resilience is fundamental to academic and personal growth. SEL fosters safe, inclusive learning environments where all students can thrive.

Implementation Actions

- Align SEL instruction and practices with the NYS SEL Benchmarks.
- Integrate SEL strategies into classroom routines, counseling programs, and restorative practices.
- Maintain a web page with resources to support student mental health and wellbeing. Example - suicide prevention/hotline
- Support professional learning for staff on trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches. Professional development may also include consideration for expectations for schoolwork during religious observances.
- Expand evidence-based **universal student wellness check-ins** (e.g., mood meters, short digital forms) into classroom routines across all grade levels.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Evidence of SEL integration in lesson plans or classroom activities.
- Staff is offered to participate in at least one SEL-related professional development session annually.
- Climate survey data is disaggregated by key demographic variables to identify and address equity gaps in perceived safety and belonging
- Data analysis informs intervention planning discussions and training for staff.

10. Technology

Philosophy

Promote mindful and balanced technology use to prevent digital burnout and support healthy social-emotional development

Ardsley's Technology Plan Guiding Principle: Ardsley commits to promoting healthy, developmentally appropriate relationships with technology. This includes supporting student well-being, attention, balance, and self-regulation, while helping students critically examine how digital tools, platforms, and media influence behavior, learning, and mental health.

2026-29 Technology Plan Digital Wellness Framework Goal:

Align and integrate a Digital Wellness Framework within the district's SEL and MTSS structures to support balanced, safe, and responsible technology use for all learners and staff.

Implementation Actions

- Embed assured learning experiences designed to cultivate digital citizenship, media literacy, and digital wellness expectations into schoolwide practices, including MTSS structures and strategies, to promote focus, self-regulation, and healthy tech habits;
- Provide professional learning for staff on:
 - modeling digital wellness and recognizing signs of digital overload or misuse,
 - digital citizenship and media literacy, and
 - MTSS and SEL support structures that align with the Digital Wellness Framework;

- Engage families and caregivers through shared language, resources, and guidance around digital wellness at home and school; and
- Use data and feedback to monitor implementation, assess impact, and refine digital wellness supports across tiers.

11. Community and Family Engagement

Philosophy

Partnerships with families and the broader community enhance the district's ability to support the whole child and strengthen collective wellness goals.

Implementation Actions

- Communicate Wellness Policy updates and opportunities for family participation through multiple channels (website, newsletters, meetings).
- Invite family and community input during the triennial policy review process.
- Highlight and celebrate district wellness initiatives through regular communications.
- Integrate a message about whole-community wellness and walk families through the resources available for mental and emotional wellness during key community events (e.g., Back-to-School Night, Parent-Teacher Conferences)

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Wellness information shared annually with families.
- Community feedback incorporated into the triennial review.
- Increased family participation in wellness-related events or surveys.

12. Professional Learning and Staff Wellness

Philosophy

Staff well-being directly influences school climate and student success. Professional learning and wellness opportunities help staff model and sustain healthy behaviors.

Implementation Actions

- Develop a plan to ensure all staff (including administrative, custodial, and bus drivers) receive foundational training on key SEL concepts.
- Offer voluntary staff wellness initiatives that promote physical and emotional health.
- Encourage staff participation in district wellness events and challenges.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Annual PD offerings include at least one wellness-focused session.
- Staff participation in wellness initiatives documented.

- Explore assessments related to staff needs and stress points (e.g., workload, meetings, administrative requirements) and use the data to inform changes to school operations and support structures.

13. Notification, Transparency, and Recordkeeping

Philosophy

Transparency builds trust and ensures that the district's wellness goals are visible and accountable to all stakeholders.

Implementation Actions

- Post the current Wellness Policy, District Wellness Coordinator contact information, and wellness assessments on the district website.
- Maintain documentation of implementation activities, assessments, and policy updates.
- Share annual progress updates with the Board of Education and community.

Measurement / Success Indicators

- Policy and coordinator contact information publicly available.
- Annual update shared with stakeholders.
- Required documents maintained and easily accessible.

Overall Evaluation Framework

- **Annual Review:** Conducted by the District Wellness Committee using the benchmarks laid out in this Implementation plan.
- **Triennial Assessment:** Publicly reported, identifying progress, gaps, and next steps.
- **Data Sources:** Meeting minutes, menus, PD logs, participation rates, and school climate surveys.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Results guide revisions to action steps and professional learning priorities each year.

Supporting Resources

- **Alliance for a Healthier Generation:** www.healthiergeneration.org
- **CDC Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC):** www.cdc.gov/wsc
- **NYS SEL Benchmarks:** [NYS SEL Benchmarks PDF](#)
- **USDA Team Nutrition & Smart Snacks Guidance:** www.fns.usda.gov/tn
- **SHAPE America Physical Education Standards:** www.shapeamerica.org

Appendix

Annual Assessment: Under Development

School Meals Student Feedback Survey

[School Meals Student Feedback Survey](#)

Non-Food Classroom Rewards

- **The “V.I.P.” Chair:** Allow the student to sit in the teacher’s chair (or a special beanbag) for a set period.
- **Show and Tell Lead:** Give them an unscheduled 5-minute slot to share something special with the class.
- **Line Leader for the Day:** A classic favorite for younger elementary students.
- **Hat Day Pass:** Allow the student to wear their favorite hat in class for the day.
- **Homework Pass:** A “Get Out of HW Free” card for one specific assignment.
- **Preferential Seating:** Let them choose their seat (or sit next to a friend) for one lesson or the whole day.
- **Teacher’s Assistant:** Let them help with tasks like passing out papers, taking attendance, or operating the smartboard.
- **Extra Recess:** 10–15 minutes of additional outdoor time (usually works best as a whole-class reward).
- **Lunch with the Teacher:** A small group or individual lunch session to talk about non-school topics.
- **Brain Break Selection:** Let the student choose the next GoNoodle, dance video, or classroom game.
- **Read Aloud Choice:** The student picks the book the teacher reads to the class.
- **Class Cheer:** Create a special 5-second cheer or “secret handshake” just for that student.

Non-Food Fundraising Ideas

Service-Based Fundraisers

- **Car Wash** – Works well in spring and fall; partner with a local business for space.
- **Yard Work Day** – Raking leaves, weeding, mulching, or snow shoveling for community members.
- **Gift Wrapping Service** – Offer wrapping services during the holiday season.
- **Technology Help Sessions** – Students assist community members with smartphones, tablets, email, or social media.
- **Babysitting Night** – Parents pay a fee while students supervise children during a designated evening.
- **Pet Care Services** – Dog walking, pet sitting, or pet supply drives.

Event-Based Fundraisers

- Trivia Night
- Talent Show
- Movie Night
- Battle of the Classes
- Escape Room Event
- Family Game Night
- Student vs. Staff Competition

Merchandise Sales

- School spirit apparel
- Custom water bottles
- Car magnets
- Stickers
- Phone wallets
- Tote bags
- Lanyards
- Seasonal ornaments

Creative Fundraisers

- Teacher Dare Fundraiser
- Principal Challenge
- Photo Contest
- Art Auction
- Craft Fair
- Community Scavenger Hunt

Recycling and Collection Drives

- Bottle and can collection drive
- Clothing donation drive
- Shoe collection fundraiser
- Electronics recycling event
- Ink cartridge and printer toner recycling

School-Wide Fundraisers

- Color Run
- Walk-a-Thon

- Read-a-Thon
- Dance Marathon
- Silent Auction

Passive Fundraisers

- Spirit-wear online store
- Community sponsorship banners at school events
- Local business sponsorships
- Crowdfunding campaigns for specific club projects

Highest-Profit Options

- Trivia Night
- Silent Auction
- Color Run/Walk-a-Thon
- Student vs. Staff Sports Event
- Yard Work or Service Day
- Teacher Dare Fundraiser
- Talent Show
- School Spirit Merchandise