

Wellness Policy

Waltham Public Schools is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects the health and well-being of students and staff by supporting healthy eating, physical activity, health education, and wellness programs. The goal of the Wellness Policy is to encourage and enhance the health and safety of all students and staff in order to provide a supportive learning environment. To best achieve this goal, the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) recommends a comprehensive approach that includes students, parents, school staff, health care providers, community organizations, and government agencies. The Wellness Policy includes on-going assessments and evaluations in order to achieve goals and meet the needs of students and staff.

SHAC meets at least quarterly during the school year and is responsible for reviewing and recommending, to the Superintendent and School Committee, district wide policies that promote student wellness. Committee membership includes, but is not limited to: the Superintendent, Director of Nursing, Food Services Director, Director of Health and Science, Athletic Director, school physician, school nurses, school counselor, students, parents, teachers, a member of the Board of Health, a School Committee member, and community members that serve youth and their families.

Nutrition Guidelines for Schools

Waltham School Nutrition Program will provide meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) & National School Breakfast Program (NSBP) that:

- Meet nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- Provide breakfast and lunch meals to all students on all school days.
- Are appealing and attractive to children and are served in a clean and pleasant setting.
- Eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-priced school meals.
- Provide professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools.
- Ensure all required and effective food safety and food allergy practices are applied to all foods prepared, sold, or served at school.

A La Carte and Competitive Foods:

- All food and beverages made available to students at school (sold or served in the cafeteria during the school day - this includes from midnight to 30 minutes after school) must be consistent with current USDA Smart Snacks for Schools Regulations and the Massachusetts state guidelines of the Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools (105 CMR 225.000). Vending machines shall comply with these specific regulations at all times.
- SHAC will develop "WPS Food Guidelines" which will consist of a list of approved foods for use in schools.
- "WPS Food Guidelines" will be updated yearly by the SHAC and be used as a tool for school staff and the parent community for adherence to policy.

Food Celebrations, Fundraisers, Rewards and Food in the Classroom:

- Snacks may be brought from home for a child's own consumption, with the understanding that some classrooms may need to restrict some types of snacks due to specific allergies that classmates or staff may have, such as nut allergies.
- Parents and staff may not send or bring in any snacks to be shared because every school has children who have severe, life-threatening allergies of all kinds. No child shall be put at risk to have an allergic reaction from foods brought into school.
- For all school celebrations or events, during the school day, food free parties should be enforced to align with the WPS Life Threatening Allergy Policy. If food or beverages will be offered or provided, they must meet the "WPS Food Guidelines" or be purchased through the School Nutrition Department. School building principals shall be responsible for monitoring compliance.
- All fundraising activities or school store sales involving food occurring 30 minutes before, during, and up to 30 minutes after the school day must meet the "WPS Food Guidelines."
- If foods are used as a reward in school when specified in an IEP, 504 or behavior plan, they should meet "WPS Food Guidelines" or be authorized by the principal in coordination with the nurse.

Meal Times & Scheduling:

- Students will be allowed adequate time to eat lunch and breakfast.
- Access to hand washing or sanitizing prior to meal periods is available at all schools.
- In accordance with the WPS Life Threatening Food Allergy Policy, there is no food sharing allowed amongst students.
- Drinking water is available for students to drink at no cost throughout the day.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Nutrition Education follows the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) Health Education Standards:

- Promotes health.
- Promotes dietary consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat, and fat-free dairy products.
- Educates students on the relationship between caloric intake and energy expenditure.
- Is integrated throughout the curriculum in subject areas such as science, health, and physical education.
- Coordinates efforts among teachers and food service personnel.
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, participatory activities such as contests, promotions, taste testings, school gardens, and farm visits.
- Increases parental awareness of nutrition education via online resources, bulletin boards, and colorful displays in the café to guide students to make good food choices.
- Involves community partnerships at various school wide health and wellness events such as a Health and Wellness Fair (high school and middle schools), a Health and Wellness Night (elementary schools), and a Fitness Day (elementary field days).

Waltham Public Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating among students. Through the classroom and the school meal program the district will:

- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing activities.
- Include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testings, farm visits, and school gardens.
- Promote sustainable practices such as composting and recycling.

Health and Wellness

Health Education Staff & Classes:

- The health curriculum follows the Massachusetts DESE Health Curriculum frameworks.
- Students will understand the growth requirements of all living things and recognize that humans must also take in the nutrients necessary for proper growth and development by the end of Grade 5.
- Students will have sufficient practice in deciding what constitutes a healthy diet by the end of Grade 5.
- The elementary science and health curriculum will complement the physical education curriculum and the efforts of the school community in enabling students to make healthy choices in nutrition and fitness.
- Students will understand the maturation process (in Grades 4 and 5).
- All students in Grades 6-8 are enrolled in a health education class that includes: nutrition education, the importance of proper nutrition in disease prevention, substance use, bullying prevention, disordered eating, human body systems, healthy relationships, sexuality, and sexual health.
- All non-Grade 9 high school students are involved in health education through our physical education program (8 classes per year).
- Grade 9 Wellness Course includes a semester of Health and a semester of PE. Content covers health and wellness, decision making/goal setting, risk, drug prevention, the human body systems, disease prevention, sexuality education, stress management and nutrition.
- Elective health education classes at the high school are full year classes and include offerings such as: Current Health, Honors Health, Stress Management and Violence Prevention, and Nutrition and Fitness For Life.

Physical Education

Physical Education:

- Students in Grades K - 5 have 55 minutes of PE/week.
- Students in Grades 6 - 8 have two 57 minute classes of PE over a six day cycle.
- Students in Grades 9 - 12 have two 57 minute classes of PE/week.
- All high school students are required to pass PE all four years.
- Teacher/student ratios for physical education classes will be similar to all other classes with 25/1 being the average.
- Students typically spend at least 50% of their physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- All students participate in fitness tests working up to quarterly tests during high school.

Physical Education Staff and Classes:

- Qualifications: The entire PE staff has a Professional License in Physical Education and is certified by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

- All units are standards based. Units are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Health Frameworks (Standard 2) and the North American Standards for Physical Education (NASPE - Standards 1-5). The curriculum is designed to develop and challenge students mentally, physically, and socially. Students will learn to work cooperatively, communicate respectfully, while developing an array of motor skills and movement patterns. The goal is to create lifelong learners who understand the important role physical activity plays in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Recess/Physical Activity Breaks

- Waltham Public Schools will acknowledge the importance of physical activity and having a break from school work.
- Waltham Public Schools will encourage physical activity breaks throughout the school day at all levels.
- Recess for up to 30 minutes, is an expected part of the school day for all K-5 students at every elementary school. This recess should not be taken away as a form of punishment for student misbehavior without notifying the principal.
- Students with disabilities, whose Individual Education Program (IEP) teams deem it appropriate, will have access to Adapted Physical Education.

Health Services

- The district will strive to have a minimum of one DESE certified nurse per every school to align with the Department of Public Health's recommendation of one nurse per every 500 students.
- School nurses promote healthy eating and healthy behaviors for all students and staff with individual and classroom education and outreach to families. This may include web resources, bulletin boards, newsletters, etc.
- School nurses will encourage a healthy lifestyle at school and at home, incorporating concepts of mindfulness when appropriate.
- School nurses are trained to recognize various medical/psychological/psychosocial conditions related health problems among students and refer them to their PCP and/or appropriate resources.
- School nurses will be offered the opportunity for wellness-focused professional development opportunities.
- School nurses screen students for height, weight, and BMI as directed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). Data is compiled and sent to the MDPH annually.
- School nurses are responsible for monitoring immunization compliance and working with administrators to ensure students comply with MDPH immunization requirements.
- School nurses are responsible for completing annual vision, hearing, postural, and SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) screenings according to Massachusetts General Laws and the requirements set forth by the MDPH.

School Counseling Services

- Minimum of one DESE certified school counselor per school, strive to reach recommended level of one school counselor per 250 students.

- School counselors provide social, emotional, and behavioral support for students, through individual, small group, and whole class interventions, to promote emotional well-being and increase academic performance.
- School counselors remain current on mental health issues including: anxiety, depression, separation/school phobia, divorce, grief, family conflict, physical/sexual/emotional trauma, neglect, suicide, substance abuse, teasing and/or bullying; peer relations, coping skills, etc.
- School counselors review data on student achievement and development on a continual basis and work with the faculty, students, parents, and/or administration to interpret the data.
- School counselors demonstrate the day-to-day ability to anticipate and to resolve problems and crises and consult and collaborate with staff, parents, and outside providers.
- Schools will continue to ensure appropriate and particular attention to those students in protected categories.

Staff Wellness

Waltham Public Schools (WPS) values the health and wellbeing of every staff member and therefore plans and implements activities that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff are encouraged to participate in a variety of wellness opportunities throughout the district including: wellness focused professional development, weight management groups, yoga, boot camps, reduced membership costs to YMCAs, BP clinics, and annual flu immunization clinics. Staff members are also offered various resources through our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP can be accessed through the Human Resources Department.

Monitoring and Compliance

- The Superintendent is the designated person charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the local wellness policy.
- The WPS Wellness Policy will be posted on the school webpage and in faculty and student handbooks.
- Building principals are responsible for monitoring and managing the Wellness Policy in their building.
- A survey to assess risk behaviors will be administered every 2 years to students in Grades 7-12. The data will be used to modify and improve the instructional content to meet the changing needs of the student body.
- Body Mass Index (BMI) data will be analyzed at targeted Grades (4,7, and 10) to assess the health of the student population.
- The SHAC will conduct a district assessment utilizing the School Health Index, PACER test data and BMI data every 2 years, and report to the School Committee. Public notification will be given at this time, and the opportunity to provide public input will be given.
- Review and revisions to the Wellness Policy will be conducted every 2 years or if any state or federal law or mandated guidelines impact the policy.
- Local Wellness Policy staff training will be conducted yearly during new teacher orientation and as part of the district annual Bullying and Civil Rights Training.

Adopted: August 31, 2017

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