

WELLNESS POLICY

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, food allergies of all kinds are on the rise among youngsters across the United States;

Thus, the Wantagh Union Free School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Wantagh Union Free School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in Grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the health, religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning, and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs and with related community services.

Nutrition Education

- Students in Grades K-12 receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors.
- Nutrition education is offered in the school dining room as well as in the classroom, with coordination between the food service staff and teachers.

- Students receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, cafeterias, homes, community, and media.
- District health education curriculum standards and guidelines include both nutrition and physical education.
- Awareness of food allergies/sensitivities should be highlighted in each school either through curriculum initiatives, assembly programs, or collaborations with outside agencies.
- Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.
- Nutrition is integrated into the health education or core curricula (e.g., math, science, language arts).
- Schools link nutrition education activities with the coordinated school health program.
- Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

Physical Education/Activity

- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes, daily recess periods for elementary school students, and the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.
- Schools work with the community and government to create ways for students to walk or bike safely to and from school.
- Schools encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Schools provide training to enable teachers and other school staff to promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among students.
- A daily recess period will be provided as appropriate.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual as well as team sports to encourage life-long physical activity provided funding is available.
- After-school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation.
- Physical education should be designed to build interest and proficiency in the skills, knowledge, and attitudes essential to a lifelong physically active lifestyle. It should include providing information, fostering a positive atmosphere, encouraging self-discipline, developing motor skills, and promoting activities that can be carried over the course of students' lives.
- Physical education should provide safe and satisfying physical activity for all students, including those with special needs.

Nutrition Guidelines

- All foods served in the student cafeterias will comply with the current *USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Food providers will offer a variety of age appropriate healthy food and beverage selections for elementary schools, middle school, and high school.
- Schools should strive to minimize foods of minimal nutritional value.
- Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the school.
- Classroom celebrations should encourage healthy choices and portion control. Schools should assist parents with guidance on foods that are appropriate for such celebrations.
- Where food is awarded to students for accomplishments, schools and teachers will offer a variety of foods that meet the nutrition standards as set in this policy and will be sensitive to the health concerns of all students. Alternatives to food rewards should always be considered.
- Classroom snacks should reinforce the importance of healthy choices.
- Carbonated beverages should not be available to students during the instructional portion of the day.
- Bottled water and juices should always be available to students during lunch.
- Drinking water and hand washing facilities should be conveniently available for students at all times.
- Lunch periods should be scheduled as near the middle of the day as possible and all children will have the opportunity to have lunch.
- Students should be provided sufficient time to eat during meal periods.
- Schools should ensure that students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals are not treated any differently from other students or easily identified by their peers.
- School food service providers should adopt methods of cooking that decrease fat, calorie, and sodium levels in food.
- The school district in conjunction with the food management service will make available details to parents requesting information regarding ingredients in the preparation of food. In addition, parents may request detailed information on the food purchases of their child.
- The school district will provide opportunities for ongoing professional training and development for food service staff and teachers in the areas of nutrition and physical education.

Monitoring and Implementation

- The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.
- School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In

addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

- The District Nutrition Committee comprised of parents, teachers, administrators, and students representing each school as well as Board of Education members will meet periodically to review the implementation of the District Wellness Policy.
- The superintendent or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.
- Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies, provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity, and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

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