

Ware Public Schools

Wellness Policy

STUDENT NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Policy Intent/Rationale:

The Ware Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind.

The following guidelines are geared toward teaching children and families to make better choices. We encourage parents to follow these guidelines as much as possible. The intent is to have teachers, administrators and staff act as facilitators of the guidelines addressed in this policy, rather than enforcers. The emphasis will be on educating families and staff to voluntarily make better choices.

The goals of this policy are to:

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.**

The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity. A healthy school environment should not be sacrificed because of a dependence on revenue from high-added fat, high-added sugar, and low nutrient foods to support school programs.

- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.**

All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities are encouraged to meet or exceed the district nutrition standards. Emphasis should be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. To ensure high quality, nutritious meals, foods should be served with consideration toward variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging.

- C. Expand opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.**

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity should be offered throughout the school's education program from grades K through 12. Physical activity should include regular instructional physical education, in accordance with The Massachusetts Physical Education Framework, as well as co-curricular activities, and recess.

- D. Establish and maintain a district-wide School Wellness Advisory Committee with the purposes of:**

- developing guidance to explicate this policy
- monitoring the implementation of this policy
- evaluating policy progress and reporting results to the School Committee on an annual basis
- serving as a resource to school sites
- revising policy as necessary
- ensure consistent healthful choices among all school venues that involve the sale of food.

STUDENT NUTRITION

The School Breakfast/Lunch Programs:

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- The full meal school breakfast and lunch programs will continue to follow the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs.
- The School Food Service Program provider will strive to follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards (www.ActionForHealthyKids.org) when determining the items in a la carte and “competitive foods” sales.
 - A la Carte and “competitive foods” items that do not meet the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards may be acceptable when offered on a very infrequent, intermittent basis.
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Cafeteria Environment:

- A cafeteria environment that provides students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate shall be developed.
- The cafeteria environment is a place where students have:
 - Adequate space to eat in clean, pleasant surroundings;
 - At least 20 minutes to eat lunch meals
 - Access to hand washing or hand sanitizing facilities before meals.

Fundraising:

- All fund raising projects that occur on school grounds, where the sale of the product will result in the consumption of the product before or **during** the instructional day must follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards when determining the items being sold.
- All Fund raising projects for sale and consumptions **after** the instructional day are strongly encouraged to follow the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards.
- Organizations operating concessions at school functions will be encouraged to include healthy food choices in their offerings. It is recommended that groups market these healthy options at a lower profit margin to encourage selection by students. All organizations will be provided with a copy of the Mass Action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards.
- In compliance with federal code 7 CFR 210 “... such rules or regulations shall prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value.... in the food service areas during meal periods.” The sale of other competitive foods may be permitted during meal periods, on occasion, with the approval of the food service director.

Teacher-to-Student Incentive:

The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is strongly discouraged. Should teachers feel compelled to utilize food items as an incentive, they are required to adhere to the Mass action for Healthy Kids Nutrition Standards (copies of the standards will be available as a resource to faculty and staff).

Classroom Parties/Group Snack:

- At the elementary level, there should be one adult from each classroom/organization in charge of making sure a variety of foods, including healthy foods, are offered at school/classroom functions.
- No candy will be allowed in the classrooms. (except for special occasions at the discretion of the Building Principals).
- Only 100% juice, milk or water will be available to students at the elementary and middle school level.
- It is recommended that classroom parties for holidays and other special occasions be limited to one dessert item, with the emphasis on low fat or healthier baked goods.
- Parents will be provided with a list of suggested healthy snacks to send in for classroom snack or parties.
- It is recommended that Birthdays be celebrated with non-food items (such as pencils, stickers, donating a book to the school library). If a parent wishes to celebrate a birthday with a food item, they are encouraged to select something from a list of healthy alternatives provided to households at the beginning of the year.

Food Allergies:

It is recognized by the Ware Public Schools that food allergies can pose a serious risk to certain students; therefore the following recommendations have been developed.

- Food sent in to school for the consumption of **more than one student cannot contain nuts or nut oils.**
- The school may prohibit specific food products from entering the classroom or may prohibit home baked food items from celebrations.
- A peanut free eating area will be provided in each school as needed.
- Information about students' food allergies will be kept in the classroom. These foods will not be used for class projects, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking or other projects.
- With parental permission, a letter will be sent home with classmates to inform families of specific classroom allergies and restrictions.

Healthy Lifestyle/Family Activity Information:

- Healthy lifestyle information will be available to parents beginning at the elementary level. . This information may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, and through any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

Staff Nutrition & Physical Activity Education:

With the purposes of:

- Encouraging all school staff to improve their own personal health and wellness
- Improving staff morale
- Creating positive role modeling
- Building the commitment of staff to promote the health of students
- Building the commitment of staff to help improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

DISTRICT NUTRITION STANDARDS

Nutrition Standards Intent/Rationale:

The Ware Public Schools strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient dense foods for all school functions and activities. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. In an effort to support the consumption of nutrient dense foods in the school setting, the district has adopted the following nutrition standards governing the sale of food, beverage, and candy on school grounds. Schools are encouraged to study these standards and develop building policy using the following District Nutrition Standards as minimal guidelines.

Food:

- Encourage the consumption of nutrient dense foods, i.e. WHOLE GRAINS, FRESH FRUITS, VEGETABLES, and DAIRY PRODUCTS.
- Foods not included in a USDA approved meal pattern for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day, will have no more than 30% of its total calories derived from fat.
- Foods not included in a USDA approved meal pattern for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the instructional day, will have no more that 10% of its total calories derived from saturated fat.
- Nuts and seeds with minimal added fat in processing (no more than 3 grams of added fat per 1.75 ounce or less package size) are exempt from these standards because they are nutrient dense and contain high levels of monounsaturated fat.
- Sales of candy will not be permitted on school grounds. Sales of candy for fundraising will be strongly discouraged.

Beverages:

- In the Elementary schools, only milk and 100% juice or water in 8 oz or less will be offered. Milk is required for all lunches. 100% Juice or water may be offered in 8 oz or less for sale on an a la carte basis
- In the middle schools, only milk, 100% juice, or water in 12 oz containers or less will be offered. Milk is required for all lunches. 100% juice or water in 12 oz containers or less may be offered for sale on an a la carte basis.
- In the high school, beverages in 12 oz containers or less will be offered. Milk, water or flavored waters can be sold in any size. The emphasis will be on offering milk, water and 100% juice products.
- The District will phase out all school-sponsored sales of “soda” products by 2008. Organizations selling beverages on school grounds will be required to provide a healthy alternative to any “soda” products offered at competitive prices.

STUDENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

District Physical Activity Goal:

The Ware Public Schools shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities, aligned with the Massachusetts Education Framework, that provide students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

The Ware Public Schools shall utilize the following Implementation Strategies:

1. Physical education classes and physical activity opportunities will be available for all students.
2. Physical activity opportunities shall be offered daily during or after school. These opportunities could include recess, physical education class, athletics, intramural or after school programs.
3. As recommended by the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), school leaders of physical activity and physical education shall guide students through a process that will enable them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness through the following:
 - Expose youngsters to a wide variety of physical activities
 - Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
 - Encourage self-monitoring so youngsters can see how active they are and set their own goals
 - Individualize intensity of activities
 - Focus feedback on process of doing your best rather than on product
 - Be active role models
4. Introduce developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment, (e.g. FitnessGram, Physical Best or President's Council) to the students at an early age to prepare them for future assessments.

Adoption Date: August 30, 2006

