

Dover City Schools Wellness Policy

PHILOSOPHY

- ★ 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, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and
- ★ Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Dover City 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 Dover City 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 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 (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks],
- 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.

STEPS TO ACHIEVE POLICY GOALS:

I. SCHOOL HEALTH COUNCILS

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will create, strengthen, or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies.

A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus School Meals

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

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables; and
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA).

Schools should engage students and parents, 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, schools should share 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.

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, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program
- 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. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab-and-go” or classroom breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling

Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities
- may schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools)
- will provide students access to handwashing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

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, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

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.

Foods and beverages sold individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.) meet USDA requirements.

Elementary Schools

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 and whole grain rich products.

Middle and High Schools

In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

Allowed: water beverages without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy beverages (to be defined by USDA)

Foods

A food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
- will have no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars;
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving per entree items.

Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually if being consumed during the school day. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards

Schools will not use foods or beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above) as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations

Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Dover City School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise); and
- links with school meal programs, other school foods.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents

The district/school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.

All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will be offered physical education. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity is encouraged.

Daily Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

All elementary, middle, and high schools may offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

School spaces and facilities may be available to students, staff, and community members. These spaces and facilities also may be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring

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.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas. In addition, the school district will document the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

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.

Policy 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.