

Instruction 6142.101

School Wellness Policy

Policy Intent/Rationale

Windham Public Schools promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Windham Public Schools 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.

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.

To the extent possible, all foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutritional guidelines set forth by the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) and the Connecticut State Department of Education. 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, tastes, safety and packaging.

C. Provide 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 will include regular instructional physical education as well as co-curricular activities and recess.

D. Windham Public Schools is committed to improve academic performance in high-risk groups so that no child is left behind.

Educators, administrators, parents, health practitioners and communities must consider the critical role student health plays in academic stamina and performance and adapt the school environment to ensure students' basic nourishment and activity needs are met.

Student Nutrition

The Board recognizes that healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. Schools have a responsibility to help students and staff establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students eating habits.

The School Breakfast/Lunch Programs

Although the Windham Board of Education believes that the District's nutrition and food services operation should be financially self-supporting, it recognizes, however, that the nutrition program is an essential educational and support activity. Therefore, budget neutrality or profit generation must not take precedence over the nutrition needs of its students. In compliance with federal law, the District's National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) shall be nonprofit. The District National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and after school snack program will comply with all the federal requirements for program operation.

Cafeteria Environment

Students will be provided with a pleasant and safe environment for eating meals, In accordance with state law, a minimum of 20 minutes will be allowed for lunch. The inclusion and consumption of soda by students is prohibited during the regular school day. All juice must contain 100% fruit juice and carbonated beverages of any kind are strongly discouraged. Exceptions may be made for carbonated water or some carbonated juices with prior approval by the Food Service Director. School dining areas will be periodically reviewed by building principals to ensure that the physical structure of the eating area is in good repair, seating is not overcrowded, noise is not allowed to become excessive, rules for safe behavior are consistently enforced, tables and floors are cleaned between meal periods and appropriate supervision is provided.

Fundraising

All fund raising projects involving sale and consumption of food within and prior to the instructional day will adhere to the federal NSLP and SBP regulations. This regulation requires, that any foods sold to students within the school day, must be certified by the Food Service Director, to ensure that these foods meet the USDA and the CSDE standards. The sale of non-food items is strongly encouraged to be used for fund-raisers.

Nutrition Practices in Classroom

Healthy snacks in appropriate portion sizes are strongly encouraged. The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is strongly discouraged. Non-food alternatives are strongly encouraged for classroom celebration.

Parent/Guardian Information

Wherever possible, nutritional information will be provided to parents on healthy snack, breakfast and lunch ideas, nonfood birthday celebration ideas, calcium needs of children, healthy portion sizes, food label reading guidelines, and fun activities to encourage physical activity outside of school. Dissemination vehicles can include but not be limited to newsletters, publications, open houses, speakers through the PTO and health fairs.

Faculty Information

Nutritional information will be available to staff members through a variety of means such as in-service training, publications, through the school-based health center program, curriculum and publications which will include but not be limited to alternative birthday celebrations, activities to increase physical activity in the classroom, healthy snacks, alternative non-food reward options and alternatives to withholding recess as a consequence for student actions.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education topics shall be integrated within the health education program and be consistent with the State of Connecticut's health education standards/guidelines/framework. Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn:

- Nutritional knowledge, including but not limited to the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements, and safe food preparation handling and storage;
- Nutrition-related skills, including but not limited to planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutritional information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising, and
- How to assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement and achieve these goals.

Nutrition education will be supported and supplemented whenever possible by the school health and school based health center programs.

Physical Activity

The Board recognizes that schools have a responsibility to help students and staff establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U. S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer and diabetes in particular. Promoting a physically active lifestyle among young people is important because it can help increase students' capacity for learning, it has substantial health benefits and it helps lay the foundation for being regularly active throughout life.

Windham Public Schools shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities, aligned with the State physical education requirements, which provide students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle.

Physical Education

Developmentally appropriate components of a health-related fitness assessment will be introduced to students at an early age to prepare them for future assessments. Physical education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include movement, personal fitness, and personal and social responsibility. Students should be able to demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill and practice. A health-related fitness assessment will be administered with students beginning in grade 3. Students shall receive results and use this as a baseline in understanding their own level of fitness and for treating fitness goals and plans. For students with medical issues, adaptive/alternative plans will be made. Students cannot have physical education withheld for disciplinary reasons. During inclement weather, there is a back-up plan for physical education. Wherever appropriate, physical activity will be incorporated into classroom routines.

Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs

School staff should encourage and support the participation of all students in extracurricular activities, including but not limited to interscholastic athletics and intramural sports, yet such participation is a privilege and not a right. Windham Public Schools may establish and equitably enforce reasonable eligibility requirements based on appropriate grade, enrollment status or residency, satisfactory academic performance, acceptable attendance record, good conduct and suitable health status or physical condition. Students denied permission to participate in an extracurricular activity shall receive a prompt explanation of the reasons, have an opportunity to respond and be provided with opportunities to reestablish their eligibility.

Other Opportunities for Physical Activity

Recess: Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall encourage and develop schedules that provide time within every school day for preschool, elementary and middle school students to enjoy supervised recess. The schools shall have playgrounds or other facilities and equipment available for free play. Recess shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes. Staff shall not deny a student participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment, nor should they cancel it for instructional make-up time.

School/Community Collaboration: Windham Public Schools shall work with the Windham Recreation Department and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff for physical activity during their out-of-school time.

Staff Wellness: All school staff are encouraged to improve their own personal health and wellness. Windham Public Schools will strive to plan, establish and implement activities to

promote physical activity among staff and strive to provide opportunities for staff to conveniently engage in regular physical exercise.

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WINDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Willimantic, Connecticut