

## **WELLNESS**

The District is committed to providing a positive, safe, and healthy learning environment that supports the development of lifelong wellness practices, such as healthy eating, physical activities, social emotional, and mental health wellbeing for its students. In adopting this policy, it is the Board's intent to comply with relevant state and federal laws regarding wellness promotion and education.

### **I. THE DISTRICT'S WELLNESS GOALS**

The District recognizes the importance of delivering a high-quality wellness education, as well as providing a learning environment which incorporates healthy practices throughout the school day. This policy establishes the standards and procedures that the District will adhere to in working towards the following goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness:

- The District will educate, promote, support, and model healthy eating habits for its students in a manner that helps them develop healthy behaviors.
- The District's schools will comply with the nutrition guidelines outlined in the policy.
- The District will provide physical education and physical activity programs throughout the school day.
- The District will provide education in the areas of social, emotional, and mental health intended to nurture overall well-being.
- The District will establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of this policy, as well as its established goals and objectives.

### **II. NUTRITION**

#### **A. The District's Food Service Program**

The schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program (for high school only). Meals shall be available for purchase during school hours for every student. Such meals shall be served without cost or at a reduced cost to any child who meets federal income eligibility guidelines. Please visit the District's website for more information about this program.

The following standards apply to food provided through the District's food service program<sup>1</sup>:

- The District schools are committed to offering school meals that:
  - Are accessible to all students;
  - Are appealing and attractive to children;
  - Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
  - Promote healthy food and beverage choices; and
  - Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- The District's nutritional standards are based upon standards established by the USDA.

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Lunches will be served between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and students will be provided with sufficient lunch periods that are long enough to give all students adequate time to be served and to eat their lunches. The District's school lunch menu, as well as other information about the District's food services, is available on the District's website.

Information about the School Breakfast Program (which is available at the high school) will be distributed to families just prior to or at the beginning of the school year with reminders about its availability provided over the course of the school year.

See also Board Policy EFA, Healthy Food Policy

**B. Competitive Foods in Schools**

"Competitive foods" are foods and beverages available for sale on school campus during the school day, but outside of the school meal programs. See 7 CFR 210.11(a)(2). Examples include a la carte options in cafeterias, school stores, and vending machines. Competitive foods available for sale within the District's schools must comply with the USDA's nutrition standards found in 7 CFR 210.11.

Additionally, except as may be provided elsewhere in this policy, any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA nutrition standards under 7 CFR 210.11.

<sup>1</sup> The USDA has defined the school day as 12:01 a.m. through 30 minutes after the last bell. See 7 CFR 210.11(a)(5).

As the District, school athletic department, and parent teacher associations review existing contracts and consider new contracts, equipment, and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District's Wellness Policy.

Schools shall also be mindful of the availability of balanced food options during celebrations and events.

**C. Celebrations and Rewards**

All foods and beverages offered or made available by the District during the school day on the school campus shall meet or exceed the nutrition standards outlined in this policy and shall be pre-approved by the Superintendent or their designee. Individual schools are encouraged to make available a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas, and a list of foods and beverages which meet the nutritional standards found in this policy.

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**D. Water**

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students at all places and times that school meals are served at every school. Students shall be permitted to bring water bottles to school, so long as the water bottles are filled exclusively with water. See RSA 200:11-b. School principals may discipline students for the misuse of water bottles.

**E. Fundraisers**

Competitive food and beverage items sold during the school day must meet the nutrition standards for competitive food as required in this section. However, a special exemption is allowed for the sale of food and/or beverages that do not meet the competitive food standards as required in this section for the purpose of conducting an infrequent school-sponsored fundraiser. Such specially exempted fundraisers must not take place more than the frequency specified by the State agency during such periods that schools are in session.

The New Hampshire Department of Education's Technical Advisory stated that schools may "hold up to nine exempt bake sale or fundraisers, which are one day in duration, per school year." The Department further clarified that:

Under this new policy schools may configure the bake sale or fundraiser exemptions in a variety of ways to meet individual school needs. For example, a school could hold 9 separate, exempt bake sales or fundraisers throughout the academic school year. Alternatively, a school could hold three events, such as a school carnival, each of which is three days in duration, at which base sale or fundraisers of non-compliant foods are held. Districts seeking to adopt the exemption policy should consider the number of groups or clubs which may seek to hold a bake sale or fundraiser at which non-compliant foods are sold and contemplate the best way to accommodate such requests given the number of exemptions permitted.

No specially exempted fundraiser foods or beverages may be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service.

**F. Nutrition, Education and Promotion**

The District aims to teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating habits. Schools will provide educational programming that will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health. This shall include developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn food preparation skills that support nationally recognized research-based nutrition standards, as well as a health education program in compliance with Ed 306.40

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(continued)**G. Staff Qualifications**

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for school nutrition program professionals. See 7 CFR 210.30

**III. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ACTIVITY**

The District recognizes that the integration of healthy physical education and physical activity are a communal responsibility intended to minimize health risks created by extended periods of inactivity, childhood obesity, and other related health problems. The District encourages students and staff to participate in developmentally appropriate physical activity and exercise for 30 to 60 minutes each day as a way to minimize these health risks.

Schools will work to integrate health and physical activity across the school curriculum as well as to encourage the integration of physical activity before, during, and after school hours. See Board Policy IMAH, Daily Physical Activity, for specific recommended practices; however, these practices shall be in addition to and shall not be a replacement for the physical education program required by Ed 306.41.

**IV. MENTAL WELLNESS**

The Merrimack School District is committed to supporting the social emotional, behavioral, and mental health welfare of all students in the educational process. The District recognizes that social and emotional wellbeing is critical for academic achievement and success. Collaboration with students, parents/guardians, staff, and the community is an integral part of this commitment to enhance our students' emotional, mental, and physical health.

**V. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT****A. Wellness Advisory Committee**

A district-wide wellness advisory committee ("the Committee") has been established to review and make recommendations regarding implementation of, and updates to, this Policy, setting specific measurable goals for nutrition promotion, education and physical activity, and evaluation of the achievement of those goals. The Committee will also assess the nutrition and physical activity environment throughout the District and make recommendations to the School Board for a comprehensive wellness program. As needed, the Wellness Committee will request that the Superintendent notify the School Board regarding any changes that have occurred in federal and state nutrition guidelines and need to be reflected in this policy.

The Committee shall consist of representation from parents, students, the school district's food service program, the School Board, administration, teachers of physical education and school

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health professionals, an educator from each school, and the general public. The Chair of the Committee shall be the Superintendent and/or their designee, who shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy, as well as monitoring and evaluating the District's progress. The Superintendent may designate a Building Wellness Coordinator for each school to help ensure compliance with this Policy at the building level. Any building-level coordinator shall report directly to the Superintendent and/or their designee. Information related to the current members and the activities of the Wellness Committee is available on the District's website.

### **B. Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least once every three years, the Wellness Committee will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of the policy. In making this assessment, the Committee will look at the following factors:

1. The extent to which schools are in compliance with the District's Wellness Policy;
2. The extent to which the District's Wellness Policy compares to model local school wellness policies; and
3. The progress made in attaining the goals of the District's Wellness Policy.

This assessment will be memorialized in a written report, which will be made available to the public on the District's website at [www.sau26.org](http://www.sau26.org).

### **C. Annual Notification of Policy**

The District will annually inform families and the public of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy, and its implementation status. The District will make this information available via the District website and will include this policy in its student handbooks. This information will include the contact information of the District official(s) chairing the Wellness Committee (i.e., the Superintendent or his/her designee) and any Building Wellness Coordinator(s), in addition to on how the public can get involved with the District Wellness Committee.

### **D. Recordkeeping**

The Superintendent or their designee will retain records related to this Policy, to include at least the following:

- The District Wellness Policy;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the District's Wellness Policy;
- Documentation on how the District Wellness Policy and Policy assessments are/were made available to the public;

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- The name and title of the school official responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the District's Wellness Policy;
- Documentation confirming annual compliance with the requirement that the District's Wellness Policy, including update, and the most recent assessment on the implementation of the policy have been made available to the public; and
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the District Wellness Policy, including who is/was involved in each update and methods the District uses to make stakeholders aware of opportunities to participate on the District Wellness Committee.

**E. Community Involvement**

The District will communicate ways in which representatives of the District Wellness Committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the District's Wellness Policy through a variety of means appropriate for the District. The District will also inform parents/guardians of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, and the availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply. The District will use electronic means, such as email or displaying notices on the District's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy.

**Legal References:**

42 U.S.C. 1751, Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

41 U.S.C. 1771, Child Nutrition Act of 1966

Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

7 CFR 210, National School Lunch Program

7 CFR 220, School Breakfast Program

RSA 189:11-a, Food and Nutrition Programs

RSA 193-E:2-a, Substantive Educational Content of an Adequate Education

RSA 200:11-b, Water Bottle Filling Stations in Schools

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04, Policy Development

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 303.11, Food & Nutrition Services

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.40, Health Education Program

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.41 Physical Education Program

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 310, Developmentally Appropriate Daily Physical Activity

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