

Foster School District

Policy 5145

HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to assure a healthy school environment for all students that enhances student attendance and academic performance. This policy meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) (see Addendum #1 & #2).

The Foster School District is providing clear and consistent direction for all school staff, students, and parents by addressing the following areas: nutrition guidelines and education, physical and health education, and physical activity. This policy promotes and encourages students to adopt lifelong healthy behaviors that can protect students' health and well-being, as well as reduce the risk of chronic disease, and adheres to all federal and state mandates relative to the wellness of students and staff.

POLICY INTENT:

The Foster School District 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 to prevent obesity. Moreover, the District recognizes that improved health optimizes student and staff performance potential. Research studies have consistently concluded that student health status and achievement are directly connected, and in fact, that the health and well-being of students is one of the most significant influences on learning and academic achievement (see Addendum - Additional Resources #1). While the primary responsibility of schools is academic preparation, the District recognizes that schools also share in the responsibility to prepare students for life, which includes teaching and modeling the skills and behaviors necessary for lifelong healthy habits.

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POLICY COMPONENTS

1. Foster School District Health and Wellness Committee

RI General Law (16-21-28) requires the establishment of a district-wide coordinated school Health and Wellness Committee chaired by a full member of the School Committee. (See Addendum #3)

A. The School Committee will establish and maintain a Health and Wellness Committee, chaired by a school committee member, whose membership will include, but is not limited to:

- o School personnel, including but not limited to:
 - a) School Nurse Teachers
 - b) Physical Education teachers
 - c) Health Education teachers
 - d) Other staff (ex. custodian, instructional assistants)
- o District/School Administrators
- o District Food Service Director/Manager
- o Students (as appropriate)
- o Parents and guardians
- o Members of the general public not employed by the district: representatives from community businesses and nonprofit health organizations
- o Community health professionals such as nutritionists, dietitians, doctors, nurses, etc.

B. The members of the Health and Wellness Committee will:

- o Operate collaboratively and coordinate resources to drive school health objectives
- o Periodically review and suggest updates to the Health and Wellness Policy
- o Make recommendations to the Superintendent and the School Committee regarding issues related to:
 - Nutrition and physical activity policies to decrease obesity and enhance the health and well-being of students and employees
 - Physical education curriculum and instruction
 - Health education curriculum and instruction
- o Annually prepare all district, state, and federal reports required of the Wellness Committee

C. This committee shall meet no less than four times during the school year. All meetings will be public and meeting dates will be posted on the district website.

2. Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

A. Student Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

- o The Foster School District shall have a comprehensive, coordinated, sequential, standards based, age appropriate health education program for grades K-5, in accordance with RI General Law (16-22-4),

that includes nutrition themes and topics in accordance with the Rhode Island Department of Education Health Education Framework (See Addendum #4 & #5).

- o Nutritional themes will also be integrated across the core curriculum into daily lessons as appropriate.
- o Students will receive nutrition education that fosters the adoption and maintenance of healthy eating behaviors.
- o Nutrition education and wellness promotion will be linked with the entire school food environment with consistent nutrition messages throughout cafeteria programs, health fairs, field trips, after-school programming, and assemblies.

B. Parent Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

Nutrition education and wellness promotion will be provided to parents once they enter school. Communication to parents about healthy eating and physical activity may include:

- o District Wellness Newsletter
- o Postings on the district website
- o Articles and information in school newsletters
- o School presentations or assemblies
- o Other appropriate means of reaching parents

C. Staff Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

The Foster School District highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts made by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life. The Health and Wellness Committee, in conjunction with the District, will develop a plan to encourage, promote, reward and support school health and wellness. The purpose of staff wellness education and promotion will be to:

- o Encourage all staff to improve their own personal health and wellness.
- o Improve staff morale.
- o Create positive role modeling for students.
- o Build commitment of staff to improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

3. Nutrition Guidelines for All School Foods and Beverages

A. Food Safety and Security

- o All foods made available to students will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- o Food sharing between students is discouraged.
- o The School Food Service Provider will implement and maintain guidelines in order to prevent foodborne illness in schools.
- o Access to food service operations is limited to food service staff and school personnel authorized by the Superintendent or a designee.

B. Food Marketing in Schools

- o School-based marketing shall be consistent with the District's nutrition education curriculum and the promotion of good health. As such, schools will limit marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet or exceed nutrition standards for reimbursable meals and competitive foods and beverages.

- o Marketing and promotion of foods and beverages that do not meet nutrition standards is prohibited.
- o The promotion of healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and water is strongly encouraged.
- o The District will work to foster an environment that promotes healthy behaviors and activity.

C. Reimbursable Meal Program / School Food Service Provider Operations

- o All foods served as part of the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including its after-school snack component, will meet both the USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals as well as the Rhode Island Nutritional Requirements (RINR) (See Addendum #6 & #7).
- o All meals will promote fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and low sodium unprocessed items, in accordance with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans (See Addendum #8).
- o It is the District's responsibility to operate and/or contract with a high-quality food service program. Qualified professionals will administer the meal program and professional training and development will be offered by the food service provider for all food service staff working in the schools, as appropriate for their levels of responsibility. Educational materials will be provided to district/school staff assigned to meal supervision duty in order to best promote the importance of healthy eating, food safety and positive healthy lifestyle role modeling, in a clear and consistent way among all school personnel.
- o The District will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to students who are eligible for free/reduced price school meals and will prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free/reduced meals by using an electronic identification/payment system.
- o The District will ensure that all children eligible for free/reduced meals will have the opportunity to participate in the SBP and NSLP by engaging in frequent outreach to families and coordination with local agencies involved in food security issues.
- o Information on the nutritional content and ingredients of meals will be available to students and parents, as requested.
- o Food service will procure, serve, and promote locally sourced RI products as much as possible.
- o The school and school food service providers should engage students and parents through various means to assist in identifying new, healthy, and appealing food choices within the program to promote healthier eating habits.

School Breakfast Program (SBP)

To ensure that all children have a breakfast that meets their nutritional needs and optimizes their ability to learn:

- o All schools will operate the School Breakfast Program.
- o Schools will use methods to serve breakfasts that encourage participation, including but not limited to breakfast before school, grab-n-go style breakfast, etc.
- o All schools will notify students, parents, and guardians of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

Eating Environment

The Foster School District believes a well-designed and pleasant eating area is important for the promotion of healthy eating habits. Schools will address time allotted for meals, traffic flows, and cafeteria layout to ensure students are actively encouraged to eat.

All schools will strive to provide:

- o Adequate space and time in order to eat meals: ideally, minimums of 20 minutes for lunch from the time students are seated and 10 minutes for breakfast.
- o Clean, pleasant surroundings in which to eat.
- o Access to convenient hand washing and/or hand sanitizing facilities before and after meals.

Additionally, schools will adhere to the following rules:

- o There should be no scheduled activities for staff or students during school meal times unless those participating are allowed to eat while such activities take place.
- o The District will work with School Food Service Providers to explore, identify and implement ways to reduce time students spend in line.

D. Competitive Food and Beverage Sales / Other Foods and Beverages Served

The Foster School District believes in maintaining a high quality school wellness culture which relies on the good nutritional quality of all foods and beverages available and sold to all students and staff. Communicating the message of healthy eating and adherence to the Health and Wellness Policy in all food-related events within the school community will include, but is not limited to, a la carte offerings, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, rewards, classroom and school celebrations, and health fairs and other school events. The opportunity to model and promote healthy eating and healthy behaviors lies within every school event, initiative and message outside of the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, and each of these shall be treated as such.

All foods and beverages sold outside of the reimbursable school meal program (competitive foods and beverages) on school premises before, during, and up to one hour after school, must comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages, cafe a la carte, foods sold in vending machines and school store. General guidelines include: (See Addendum #9 & #10 for additional details and exemptions).

E. Fundraising

- o Non-food based fundraisers are strongly encouraged.
- o Fundraisers that promote physical activity are strongly encouraged.
- o Any foods and beverages sold on school premises before, during and up to one hour after school must comply with USDA Smart Snacks in School regulations and RI General Law (16-21-7) for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages (see Addendum #9 & #10).
- o No foods or beverages (even those that are compliant) sold as part of school fundraising can be sold during school meal service, in accordance with the District's School Food Service Provider contract.
- o Schools may permit the sale of foods and beverages that do not comply with USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages as part of school fundraising in any of the following circumstances:
 - (1) The items are sold by pupils of the school and the sale of those items take place off and away from the premises of the school;
 - (2) The items are sold by pupils of the school and the sale of those items takes place one hour or more after the end of the school day;
 - or (3) The items are sold during a school-sponsored pupil activity after the end of the school day.
- o While the sale of candy is prohibited on school premises before, during, and up to one hour after the school day by RI state law and

USDA regulation, the sale of candy at school events after hours is discouraged.

- o Compliant foods/snacks and beverages to be used for school fundraising may be purchased through the District's food service provider.

Other Foods and Beverages Served

School Staff-to-Student Acknowledgements and Incentives

- o School-based rewards must support the efforts of Foster School District nutrition policies. The use of food or candy as a reward, incentive or punishment in the classroom or school environment is prohibited.

Classroom and School Celebrations

- o The distribution of candy by students and/or staff is prohibited in the classroom and on school grounds during the school day.
- o Classroom and school celebrations will not be centered on food, except if the food items are part of a curriculum-related activity. Parties should be framed so as to discourage the consumption of unhealthy food items and should encourage food and beverage items that comply with USDA Smart Snacks in Schools regulations and RI General Law (16.21.7) for the sale of only healthier snacks and beverages (See Addendum #9 & #10).

Access to Drinking Water

- o Students and staff will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water at all times throughout the school day. Students and staff will be allowed to bring water bottles into the classroom.

4. Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical activity is critical to a child's healthy weight and lifestyle as well as to his/her ability to focus in the classroom. While Physical Education classes provide a specific environment in which students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge of personal fitness goals and practices, the Foster School District recognizes the importance of offering students additional physical activity opportunities before, during and after school.

A. Physical Education

The Foster School District will adhere to RI state requirements for physical education. Physical Education is required for all students in grades 1-12 according to RI General Law (16-22-4). Instruction in Health and Physical Education will be done using curriculum aligned with The RI Physical Education Framework (See Addendum #4 & #11).

- o Students should receive an average of 100 minutes per week of Health/Physical Education.
- o Recess, free play and after-school activities are not counted as Physical Education.
- o All Physical Education classes will be taught by an appropriately certified Physical Education teacher.
- o The district will provide adequate, safe, and appropriate facilities for Physical Education instruction at each school.
- o Physical Education teachers will utilize developmentally appropriate health-related fitness assessments (e.g. FitnessGram)
- o Waivers for Physical Education are prohibited, unless provided by a qualified physician or medical provider.

- o Student involvement in other physical activity (interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for Physical Education.
- o Physical Education classes will have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classes.

B. Physical Activity

All schools should encourage an environment that supports physical activity beyond the

Physical Education program, for students, staff, and community before, during, and after the school day.

Recess

- o All elementary schools shall allot a minimum of 20 minutes per day for recess, preferably outdoors.
- o Building administrators shall have the discretion to exceed the minimum allotted time for recess as they deem appropriate, including but not limited to awarding additional recess time to reward good behavior and student performance.
- o Building administrators shall have the discretion to hold indoor recess due to inclement weather or other concerns related to student safety during recess.
- o During times of inclement weather, alternative activities will be provided that promote free play, movement, and students' social and emotional wellness.
- o Withholding recess as a disciplinary strategy is prohibited, and teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activities as punishment.

Physical Activity Breaks

- o Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject areas whenever possible and appropriate.
- o Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons whenever possible and appropriate.

Before/After School Activities

- o Captain Isaac Paine School is encouraged to offer before/after school activities and extracurricular programs that promote staying physically active and provide opportunities for periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.
- o Schools should make an effort to offer a range of physical activities that meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs, including but not limited to clubs, classes, and intramural or interscholastic activities.

5. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

The Health and Wellness Committee shall develop regulations/procedures for the implementation of this policy.

A. Health and Wellness Policy Communication

This policy, along with any proposed updates and progress reports, will be posted and accessible on the school district website to inform and update the public (including parents, students and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the District Health and Wellness Policy.

B. Health and Wellness Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The Foster School District Health and Wellness Committee will include a review of this policy on a yearly basis and forward any recommended revisions and updates to the Superintendent and School Committee.

C. Health and Wellness Policy Compliance

Review of the Health and Wellness Policy will be included in principal and staff orientations at the beginning of the school year, with the Health and Wellness Committee leading these orientations. The School Food Service Provider shall be responsible for meeting the nutrition regulations set forth in this policy.

D. Health and Wellness Policy Reporting

The Health and Wellness Committee, working with the School Food Service Provider staff and school administration, will report publicly to the Superintendent and the School Committee on the Health and Wellness Policy implementation and evaluation on an annual basis. This report will be based on objective data collection as much as possible (including the submission of any forms or reports required by the Superintendent or designee) and will include detailed assessments of the following elements:

- oThe extent to which schools are in compliance with the Health and Wellness Policy
- oObstacles that schools report in meeting compliance of elements of the Health and Wellness Policy
- oHow the Health and Wellness Policy and practices compare to other school districts and model policies
- oA description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Health and Wellness Policy
- oA Health and Wellness Policy implementation plan or yearly goal(s) at the school level with measurable objectives for attaining these goals.

6. Areas of Importance Outside of Nutrition and Physical Education/Activity

The Health and Wellness Committee recognizes that additional topics pertaining to health and wellness, including but not limited to personal health, mental and emotional health, injury prevention, nutrition, sexuality and family life, disease control and prevention, and substance abuse and abuse prevention may be reviewed by the committee and recommendations will be forwarded to the full school committee for policy review.

Mental Health Mission Statement

Whereas mental health is essential to a child's growth, development, and capacity to learn, the Foster School District shall establish and maintain a learning environment that fosters the mental, behavioral, social and emotional well being of students and staff.

Definition:

For the purposes of this policy, "mental health" is intended to encompass the social, emotional, and behavioral well being of elementary school children and school staff.

Policy Introduction:

The Foster School District recognizes that mental health is a key component of a young person's ability to succeed in school and in life. Students today are

often confronted with a myriad of issues that can impede their social, emotional and academic development including, but not limited to, stress, anxiety, depression, substance abuse/use, partner violence, bullying, alienation, special needs, human sexuality, and gender expression. As of 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 1 in 7 American children ages 3 through 17 have a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder. Additionally, only about 20 percent of these children are ever diagnosed and receive treatment, while 80 percent aren't receiving any type of treatment. These students face an increased risk for incarceration and physical health problems, as well as decreased adult productivity. All of these factors can significantly impact students as they seek to define their roles in society. It is the commitment of the Foster School District that individuals who struggle with mental health issues, or who are at risk of developing issues, be afforded every opportunity for success.

This mental health policy is designed to ensure that the District is actively working to identify and address mental health issues confronting students, and to equip youth and families with the skills and support they need to be successful while continuing to develop an atmosphere that promotes mental health for all students. The District recognizes the risks associated with failing to address the mental health needs of students, and is committed to ensuring the health and safety of every student as well as our entire school community. This mental health policy is to be incorporated into the District's overall health and wellness policy to provide for a comprehensive approach to the health, safety and well being of our students.

This policy also recognizes that school staff may experience mental health concerns. As such, this policy seeks to address the mental health of school staff as well.

District Goals and Objectives

In order to establish a learning environment that supports mental health, the District shall initiate and maintain a series of dynamic and proactive measures that will provide for effective implementation of the District's mental health policy and facilitate collaboration among various stakeholders.

Education and Outreach

- The District shall support age-appropriate, curriculum-based initiatives to promote positive development in all of our students in the areas of critical thinking, coping strategies, problem solving, and other life skills, as well as to raise awareness while decreasing stigma among youth regarding mental health issues.
- The District shall promote a sense of community within the school, both inside and outside of the school day, by offering students the opportunity to participate in before and after school clubs, community service initiatives, and extra-curricular activities and events. The District shall also periodically review and evaluate the adequacy of these offerings.
- The District shall view youth, parents, and families as partners in ensuring the mental health of all students. As such, the District shall disseminate information regarding the mental health support services available to parents and youth, and encourage youth, parents and staff to seek support as appropriate.
- The District shall seek to work collaboratively with relevant boards, agencies, and committees whose purpose is to promote mental health.
- The District shall periodically review and provide education and training to district administrators and staff on mental health issues affecting youth.

System Supports for Students

- The District shall support school-based implementation of early intervention protocols for addressing mental health issues among individual students so that those students and families can gain access to support services as expeditiously as possible.
- The District shall foster school-based implementation of supports, as appropriate, to students returning to school after a mental health-related absence.
- The District shall collaborate with local and statewide supports, including but not limited to, local mental and behavioral health clinicians and/or counselors, mentoring programs and services, community-based mental and behavioral health services, Truancy Court, and the Foster Police Department.
- The District shall provide support staff to address the mental health needs of students, including a school nurse, social worker, and school psychologist, and will evaluate on an annual basis the adequacy of current staffing levels.
- Confidentiality shall be maintained at all times in addressing the mental health concerns of individual students.

System Supports for Staff

In an effort to support district staff regarding mental health concerns, the district will explore opportunities to facilitate access to mental health services for district staff.

Ongoing Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The Health and Wellness Subcommittee shall be responsible for the ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of the mental health policy and efforts in the district. In the course of its work, the subcommittee shall:

- Engage district administrators and staff, community-based mental health professionals, local agencies, youth and parents;
- Identify key mental health indicators in our school community;
- Assess the status of relevant school-based initiatives;
- Compile findings on an annual basis;
- Make recommendations to the Foster School Committee regarding ways to improve the District's goals, strategies, and policies for addressing mental health issues facing our youth;
- Convene on a regular basis throughout the academic year in the performance of its duties.

Summary

By recognizing that mental health is an essential component of a young person's overall growth, development, and well-being, the Foster School District is in a key position to enhance the mental health of its students. Many factors play a role in determining the mental health of a young person. While schools cannot be the sole entity in addressing mental health issues, they can play a vital role through advocacy and support. In addition, schools can create a climate where all children feel safe and respected. It is the intent of this policy to establish a framework for addressing the myriad of mental health needs of students and staff.

The implementation of this policy shall in no way affect, waive, limit, or expand the privacy rights of any student, faculty, staff, administrator or their respective family members as afforded under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, as amended, 42 U.S. C. § 300gg, 29 U.S.C. §1181 et seq., 42 U.S.C. 1320d et seq., and the Rhode Island

Confidentiality of Health Care Communications and Information Act, R.I. Gen. Laws §5-37.1-1, et seq. U.S. C.

References:

Basic Education Plan (BEP)

G-14-3.2 Psychological and Mental Health Services

Mental and emotional health issues directly impede students' abilities to learn. Such issues include bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, anxiety, and domestic violence, as well as psychiatric disorders. Therefore, each LEA shall:

- o Ensure that students have access to a coordinated program of culturally and linguistically responsive psychological and mental health services, on site or through effective referral systems;
- o Ensure that school psychological and mental health services will be provided by appropriately credentialed, high quality staff. Services must provide for identification of risks and assessment of service needs; primary prevention; individual, family, and group counseling; consultative services; and resource and service coordination; and
- o To the extent practicable, ensure that schools coordinate with community youth development, prevention, and treatment efforts

ADDENDUM

1. Public Law (108-265, Section 204) Child Nutrition WIC Reauthorization Act: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthy/108-265.pdf>
 2. Public Law (111-296, Section 204) Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>
 3. RI General Law (16-21-28), Health and Wellness Subcommittee:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-28.HTM>
 4. RI General Law (16-22-4), Instruction in Health and Physical Education:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-22/16-22-4.HTM>
 5. RI Health Education Framework:
http://www.thriveri.org/documents/RI_HE_Framework.pdf
 6. USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>
 7. Rhode Island Nutrition Requirements (RINR):
http://www.thriveri.org/documents/RINR2009_%20BOR_%20Mandated%2011%205%2009.pdf
 8. USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>
 9. USDA Smart Snacks in Schools:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>
 10. RI General Law (16-21-7), Healthier Snacks and Beverages:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-7.HTM>
 11. RI Physical Education Framework:
http://www.thriveri.org/documents/RI_PE_Framework.pdf
- Additional Resources
1. CDC publication: Health and Academic Achievement
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf
 2. RI General Law (16-21-SCHO), Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs:
http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/holding/DOH/SchoolHealthPrograms_PublicHearing_Draft_April2012.pdf

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