

Instruction

Student Wellness Policy

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The Vernon Board of Education recognizes that student health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy and fit, physically, mentally and socially. Therefore, the Board 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. It is the Board's policy to:

- A. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.
- B. Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.
- C. Provide opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.
- D. Establish and maintain a district-wide School Wellness Council with the purpose of promoting and advancing the implementation of this policy and evaluating its effectiveness.

Nutrition Standards

The Board believes that every student should develop the knowledge that will promote lifelong habits for good health and the skills needed for healthy eating behaviors. Effective nutrition education and the types of food available to students greatly influence eating behaviors.

A. Education

The Vernon School District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. All Pre-K-12 instructional staff will be encouraged to integrate nutritional themes from the Connecticut Department of Education's Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework into daily lessons when appropriate.

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1. At the elementary level, nutrition topics are integrated into the curriculum.
2. At the middle school level, nutrition education is part of the required 6th grade curriculum and a component of the Unified Arts curriculum in 7th and 8th grades.
3. At the high school level, nutrition education is part of the freshmen and sophomore health program.

B. Food Services

1. Guidelines for Food Served/Sold During School Hours
 - a. The District shall provide school meals which meet the nutritional standards required by state and federal school breakfast and lunch programs. Meals served in school before the end of the last lunch period shall conform to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
 - b. Food of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, shall not be sold or served on school premises during school hours. All foods sold to students separately from reimbursable meals (a la carte menu items) must meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. Foods meeting these requirements will be listed on the State Department of Education's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages. The District will promote the sale of naturally nutrient-rich foods, such as fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats, legumes and seeds.
 - c. Beverages of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, shall not be sold or served on school premises during school hours. All beverages sold to students will meet the requirements of state statute. Beverages meeting these requirements will be listed on the State Department of Education's List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages.

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- d. During the period of thirty (30) minutes before any meal program up until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the program, no competitive foods or beverages may be sold or served. Outside of this timeframe, competitive foods may only be sold on school premises during school hours if they meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. All beverages sold to students on school premises during school hours must meet the requirements of state statute at all times.
 - e. Food that is sold must meet the Health Department's standards in regard to storage, preparation, and serving.
 - f. Students and staff will have access to safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Fluoridated or bottled water should be made available for purchase by staff and students. Any bottled water sold to students during school hours must meet the beverage requirements of state statute.
 - g. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations during school hours or as classroom snacks must meet the District's Nutritional Standards.
 - h. The District will provide nutrition information to parents upon request. It is suggested that nutrition information also be available for foods other than school meals.
 - i. During the summer months Vernon Youth Services coordinates access to the Summer Food Service Program.
2. Cafeteria Environment
- a. The District will ensure that the Food Service Director has the appropriate degree and certification as well as ensure training and professional development for the food service staff annually.
 - b. The administration will work to optimize scheduling of meals to improve student nutrition.
 - c. Any student may eat in the school cafeteria or other designated place and shall be provided a pleasant environment in which to eat.

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- d. Access to hand washing before meals will be provided.
 - e. Meal prices will be reviewed at least every two years and established by the Superintendent and the Food Service Supervisor, with the approval of the Board.
 - f. Healthy option food should be competitively priced.
 - g. Meal prices and menus will be conspicuously posted in each cafeteria or designated meal area.
3. Guidelines for Food Served/Sold After School Hours on School Premises
- a. Food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages that do not meet the requirements of state statute can only be sold or served at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or the school store.
 - b. Foods sold or served after school hours when it is not part of a district-run after school program or at evening and community events on school grounds must provide healthy food options.
 - c. In an effort to promote healthy nutrition for our students and their families, all school organizations (PTOs, Booster Clubs, etc.) sponsoring food-based fundraisers must offer healthy food options that meet the District's Nutritional Standards. All fundraisers, including Booster Club fundraisers, require administrative approval (school principal or his/her designee).

C. Staff Development

1. Workshops

Ongoing in-service and professional development training opportunities for staff in the area of food nutrition will be encouraged and provided as necessary and appropriate. These educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, health assessments, and other appropriate nutrition-related topics.

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2. Incentives

School staff shall encourage non-food alternatives as student rewards, including fundraising incentives. Alternative rewards should be developed and promoted. However, should the staff feel compelled to use food items as an incentive, they are required to adhere to the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverage requirements of state statute.

D. Family and Community Involvement

In order to promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing nutrition education in the schools, the school administration is responsible for ensuring that:

1. Nutrition education and meal menus are made available to the parents.
2. Parents are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school meal program. If their children do not participate in the school meal program, parents should provide their children with healthy snacks/meals.
3. School staff is encouraged to cooperate with other agencies and community groups to provide opportunities for student projects related to nutrition, as appropriate.
4. School staff considers the various cultural preferences in development of nutrition education programs and food options.

Physical Activity Standards

The Board believes every student should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, maintain physical fitness, understand the short and long term benefits of physical activity, and value physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the staff is encouraged to participate in and model physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

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A. Education

The Vernon School System shall provide physical activity and physical education opportunities aligned with the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework that provides students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle. The physical education program shall provide adequate space and equipment as well as conform to all applicable safety standards.

1. Physical education classes and physical activity opportunities will be available for all students. All physical education classes include at least 50% of moderate to vigorous activity.
 - a. At the elementary level, physical education classes will meet:
 1. Kindergarten – once a week for a minimum of thirty minutes per week
 2. Grade 1 – twice a week for a minimum of sixty minutes per week
 3. Grades 2-5 – twice a week for a minimum of ninety minutes per week
 - b. At the middle school level, physical education classes will meet two times per week for a minimum of 100 minutes per week.
 - c. At the high school level, physical education classes will meet a minimum of two times per week per semester for a minimum of 160 minutes per week.
2. 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:
 - a. Expose students to a wide variety of physical activities
 - b. Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
 - c. Encourage self-monitoring so students can see how active they are and set their own goals
 - d. Individualize the intensity of activities
 - e. Focus feedback on the process of doing your best rather than on the product
 - f. Be active role models
3. 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.

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- a. The student-teacher ratio for physical education classes will comply with the Vernon Board of Education Class Size Policy.
 - b. Physical Education teachers will prepare confidential individual fitness assessments for students based on Connecticut's Fitness Standards. These assessments will be made available to parents upon request.
 - c. There will be no substitution of Physical Education classes for other physical activities.
4. Intramural activities will be offered at the elementary schools. Intramural and Interscholastic activities will be offered at the Middle School and High School. All activities are contingent on budget constraints.
 5. 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 for supervised recess in every elementary school. Daily recess shall provide opportunities for physical activity. Recess shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes.
 6. Classrooms shall incorporate, where possible, appropriate, short breaks that include physical movement.
 7. The school district may consider programs such as promoting safe and walkable routes to school.

B. Staff Development

1. Workshops

The Physical Education staff will receive professional development on a yearly basis. These educational opportunities will include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations, and workshops that focus on healthy lifestyles, fitness activities, and other appropriate physical activity related topics.

The school district will promote periodic and ongoing programs to increase nutritional knowledge and physical activity for all faculty and staff.

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2. Discipline

- a. Staff members shall not deny a student's participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline, unless the safety of students is in question. Each student is entitled to some portion of recess.
- b. The teaching and physical education staff members shall not order performance of physical activity as a form of discipline.

C. Family and Community Involvement

In order to promote family and community involvement in supporting and reinforcing physical education and activities in the schools, the school administration is responsible for ensuring:

1. Physical education activity ideas are sent home with students.
2. Parents are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school's physical education programs and after school activities.
3. School staff considers the various cultural preferences in development of physical education programs.
4. School staff is encouraged to cooperate with community groups to provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity programs.
5. Access to school sites will be provided through permitting use of facilities to community youth sports groups consistent with the District's facilities use policy so additional opportunities are available for youth to participate in quality physical activity, fitness, sports and recreation programs.

Evaluation

At the District level, the Board designates the School Wellness Council with the responsibility of ensuring that each school meets the requirements of the District Wellness Policy. At the School level, the principal of each school shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of this wellness policy.

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A. School Wellness Council

The District's School Wellness Council will meet monthly during the school year to assist in the ongoing development, evaluation, and implementation of the District-wide Student Wellness Policy. The council membership includes, but is not limited to, the District Food Service Manager, the Physical Education and Health Program administrator, a district administrative representative, a school board member, a building level administrator, a school nurse, a teacher, a staff representative from each school building, a local community partner preferably a representative from the town's Parks and Recreation Department, a parent, a student, and a health care professional. The members of this council serve at the discretion of the Board of Education.

It is the responsibility of this School Wellness Council to:

1. Monitor the implementation of the District's Student Wellness Policy and its nutrition and physical activity components.
2. Work toward the development and implementation of a Coordinated School Health Model.
3. Evaluate policy progress, serving as a resource to school sites.
4. Recommend revisions of the policy through the Superintendent or designee, as needed.
5. Promote programs on physical activity, nutrition, and wellness-related topics.
6. Explore potential funding opportunities at the federal, state and local level to support program initiatives.
7. Prepare an annual report for the Board of Education.

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B. School Level/Principal Responsibilities

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the school wellness program in promoting healthy eating and physical activity and implement program changes as necessary to increase the program's effectiveness, each school principal with the help of the physical education/health coordinator is responsible for ensuring that this Board policy and this administrative regulation are implemented as written. Further responsibilities shall include:

1. Nutrition Evaluation

- a. Assessing all building, grade-level Health Education curricula and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with state and local district educational goals and standards.
- b. Providing Health Education throughout the student's school years as part of the District's age-appropriate health program.
- c. Assessing periodically the school meal program with input from students, parents, and staff.

2. Physical Activity Evaluation

- a. Assessing all building, grade-level Physical Education curricula and materials for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with state and local district educational goals and standards.
- b. Providing Physical Education throughout the student's school years as part of the District's age-appropriate physical education program.
- c. Monitoring and assessing regularly the district's physical activity and fitness programs in conjunction with other district academic and health related programs using the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment Test. Results of this test will be reported to the Board, school sites, and made available to parents and the community on an annual basis.

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- (cf. 3542 — Food Service)
- (cf. 3542.33 — Food Sales Other Than National School Lunch Program)
- (cf. 3542.34 — Nutrition Program)
- (cf. 3452.45 — Vending Machines)
- (cf. 6142.6 — Physical Education)
- (cf. 6142.61 — Physical Activity)
- (cf. 6142.62 — Recess/Unstructured Time)
- (cf. 6142.10 — Health Education)

Legal Reference:

- Connecticut General Statutes
- 10-16b Prescribed courses of study.
- 10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and the feeding programs for public school children and employees.
- 10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.
- 10-215a Non-public school participation in feeding program.
- 10-215b Duties of state board of education re feeding programs.
- 10-216 Payment of expenses.
- 10-221o Lunch Periods. Recess.
- Public Law 108-265, The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

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