

## WELLNESS GUIDELINES

Easton Public Schools recognize that the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of our children has a direct influence on their ability to be successful students. Through a coordinated student health and wellness program, we strive to optimize student academic performance potential. This includes providing a healthy and safe learning environment, school nurse" services, nutritious school meals, health and physical education, and other opportunities for physical activity. Health and Wellness education is best learned, like other subjects, through repeated, consistent messages. To achieve this goal, it is the policy of Easton Public Schools that the nutrition and wellness education offered in the classroom is reinforced outside of the classroom as well. It is our goal to provide our students with the knowledge and tools they need to make good decisions regarding their health throughout their lives.

Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutritional recommendations of the nutrition standards of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, *the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010* and *MGL 105CMR225.000, Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food and Beverages in Public Schools*, as required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All food service equipment and facilities will meet applicable local and state standards for safe food preparation and handling, sanitation, and workplace safety. In addition, all students in grades preK-12 should have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

Furthermore, it is our expectation that specific actions and decisions will take into account the health needs and wellbeing of all children without discrimination or isolation of any child. We believe that education and open communication are vital for the creation of an environment with reduced risks for all students and their families. In order to assist children in assuming more individual responsibility for healthy decisions as they grow, it is the policy of the Easton Public Schools that the guidelines reflect student development as our children advance from the primary grades through secondary school. In addition, all Easton public schools will implement and comply with the Easton Public Schools' Life Threatening Allergy Policy.

The goal of the School Wellness Policy Overview is to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students by using the following strategies and guidelines:

1. School Breakfast and Lunch Program
  - A. Offer meals that promote good health and provide students with the appropriate daily nutrition that is consistent with the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010*.
  - B. The school breakfast and lunch will follow the *USDA Requirements for Federal School Meal Programs* and the *Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*.
  - C. By September of 2013, nutritional information will be made available to students for meals and non-prepackaged competitive foods and beverages sold in the cafeteria.

- D. Students will have access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before and after meals, in accordance to the Life Threatening Allergy Policy.
- E. The district will provide adequate lunchtime, as recommended by the *National Association of State Boards of Education*, for students to enjoy eating meals and socializing. Lunch will be scheduled as near the middle of the day as possible.
- F. Recess for elementary grades will be scheduled before lunch when feasible so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat.
- G. The families, educators, food service staff, school nurse and licensed health care personnel will collaborate to develop and implement plans to meet the needs of students with special nutritional concerns (i.e. diabetes, food allergies).

2. Other Foods in the School and Classroom

- A. All snacks and competitive foods under the control of the school department are to meet the standards set by the *General Nutrition Standards for Public Schools; 105 CMR 225.000*.
- B. These standards shall apply to competitive foods and beverages sold or provided on school grounds 30 minutes before the beginning of the school day until 30 minutes after the end of the school day.
- C. Individual school organizations are encouraged to follow the guidelines and recommendations set forth in this policy at all times.
- D. For safety and health reasons all groups, clubs and associations who wish to use the food preparation areas must hire and adhere to the instructions of a food service employee with regards to all aspects of food preparation, service, storage and facility clean up.
- E. *Competitive Foods* are defined as foods and beverages provided in:
  - a. School Cafeterias, offered as a la carte items
  - b. School buildings, including classrooms and hallways
  - c. School stores
  - d. School snack bars
  - e. Vending machines, including those in non-student areas
  - f. Concession stands
  - g. Booster sales
  - h. Fundraising activities
  - i. School-sponsored or school-related events
  - j. Any other location on school property
- F. Compliance to the competitive foods guidelines is the responsibility of the building administrators.

- G. The use of food items as part of a student incentive or reward program is not allowed except when the food items are included as part of a student's Individual Educational Plan or are directed by a licensed health care professional.
  - H. Distribution of food items in the classroom for the purpose of instruction is not allowed except when the use of specific food items is related to curriculum-based activities and enhances educational objectives (i.e. cultural awareness such as "Heritage Day"). These food items must adhere to the Competitive Food Guidelines and to the Life Threatening Allergy Policy.
  - I. Gum and hard candies may be allowed during MCAS and other standardized testing as allowed by teachers or administrators. Gum in particular has been shown to decrease stress, increase attention and improve test performance.
  - J. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to send healthy snacks for their children (i.e. the A+ snack list).
  - K. There will be no sharing of food by children at any time of the school day or on the school bus.
  - L. Birthday and other classroom celebrations are to be non-food based.
  - M. School principals or administrators may decide to exempt a limited number of school-wide celebrations from the nutritional guidelines due to practical considerations (for example offering foods for a cookout) or tradition (an ice cream social). It is expected that healthy choices will be offered alongside the exempted foods and that these exempted celebrations be limited to no more than three per academic school year.
  - N. According to applicable guidelines, plain, potable water is to be available to all students during the day at no cost.
  - O. Fresh fruit and non-fried vegetables options are to be offered at any location where food is sold. This does not include non-refrigerated vending machines and vending machines dispensing only beverages.
  - P. Students may not have food delivered to the schools (i.e. pizza or other "fast food").
3. Nutrition Education and Promotion

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

- A. 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.

- B. Includes Health units on Nutrition, Safety, Disease Prevention and Growth & Development.
  - C. Is integrated as part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects
  - D. Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens.
  - E. Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health enhancing nutrition practices.
  - F. Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity and exercise).
  - G. Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition related community services.
  - H. Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.
  - I. Includes training for teachers and other staff
4. Physical Education and Activity
- A. School-wide wellness activities shall be aligned with healthy school goals incorporated in each school's School Improvement Plan.
  - B. Physical Education will be offered at all levels and recess will be offered in full-day KG and grades 1-5 recognizing the need for regular physical activity.
  - C. Physical education classes will be taught by state certified instructors in an environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills and knowledge.
  - D. Physical education will include the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity.
  - E. Opportunities for physical activity such as recess and physical education should not be withheld as a form of discipline. Physical activities such as running laps and doing push-ups will not be used as a form of punishment.
  - F. Students will be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and after-school activities including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and other physical activity clubs.
5. Staff Education and Wellness

District and food service staff and faculty are encouraged to become full partners in the district's wellness goals.

- A. Nutrition and physical activity educational opportunities will be provided to all district and food service staff as resources allow. These opportunities will address diverse topics related to healthy lifestyles, nutrition and physical activity, and may be provided in the form of educational and informational materials, presentations or workshops.
- B. School staff are encouraged to model healthy eating, physical activity and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

### **Reporting and Communication**

1. The different school buildings (K-2, 3-5, middle and high school) will be encouraged to establish their own individual Wellness Committee to best facilitate the development, implementation and oversight of developmentally appropriate wellness programs. The composition of the smaller (K-2, 3-5, middle and high school) Wellness Committees should be similar to that of the Local Wellness Committee and, in particular, should include the school nurse who is a primary resource for wellness data.
2. One member from each smaller building level Wellness Committee will represent his/her school(s) as a member of the Easton Public Schools Local Wellness Committee.
3. Wellness information regarding nutrition (school lunch program menus and nutrition content, the healthy "A-Snack List" and other relevant information), opportunities for physical activity (organized sports and other venues), and other wellness outreach programs (anti-bullying and others) will be available to families and the community on the Easton Public School Website or by other means. This information will be reviewed, updated and expanded as needed.
4. Communication may also be provided at PTA meetings, back -to-school night and other venues as appropriate.
5. Data collected regarding the nutrition, physical activity and health of our student population as a whole (not of individual students) will be collected. This data will be used to assess the success of health initiatives, student interest, and areas for improvement as we strive to improve the health of our students and community. No attempts will be made to single out individual students, but rather data will be recorded regarding topics such as student participation in extracurricular activities, as well as that mandated by the Department of Public Health, such as Body Mass Index, hearing and vision screenings, scoliosis screenings and other health initiatives.
6. The superintendent will develop a summary report every three years on district wide compliance with the wellness policies, based on information received from the Local Wellness Committee and other resources.

### **The Easton Wellness Committee**

1. The committee shall consist of, but is not limited to, at least one member from the following groups: the school committee, school administration, school health professionals, educators, school food authorities, parents and students.
2. In addition, the committee shall encourage participation/input from other parents, students, school food authorities, school board members, school administrators, physical education instructors, school health professionals, and the public in the development and periodic review /update of the wellness policy.

### Evaluation

The wellness committee will assess all education curricula and materials pertaining to wellness for accuracy, completeness, balance and consistency with the state and district's educational goals and standards. Wellness program coordinators shall be responsible for devising a plan for implementation and evaluation of the district wellness policy and are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that schools meet the goals of the district wellness policy. Wellness program coordinators will report to the School Committee annually.

### **Addendum:**

Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Food and Beverages in Public Schools can be found at: [www.lawlib.state.ma.us/source/mass/CMR/CMRtext/105CMR225.pdf](http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/source/mass/CMR/CMRtext/105CMR225.pdf)

The "A-Snack List" can be found at: [www.ihnstalkerinstitute.org/alist](http://www.ihnstalkerinstitute.org/alist)

Massachusetts Nutrition Evaluation Tool to evaluate whether a food meets the Competitive Foods nutritional requirements can be found at: [www.ihnstalkerinstitute.org/alist/MassNETS.php](http://www.ihnstalkerinstitute.org/alist/MassNETS.php)

Revised: November 5, 2015

Adopted: June 16, 2017