

Wellness Procedures & Guidelines

Nutrition Education and Sustainability Practices

Nutrition Education in our schools will follow the nutrition standards published in The Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Frameworks as well as ABRSD procedures, guidelines and curriculum. The District supports healthy eating and nutrition education by partnering with schools to do the following:

- Integrate nutrition education and promote healthy eating not only in the cafeteria and health education classes, but also into core curricular instruction, as well as world language and exploratory subjects.
- Teach students how to read food labels and understand food marketing through media literacy.
- Promote awareness of food preparation and nutrition that includes of healthy food choices such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, and low-fat and fat-free dairy products.
- Provide stakeholders with information about healthy food preparation and dietary alternatives including various diets, organic foods, and dairy substitutes such as soy products, emphasizing caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure or physical activity.
- Include culturally relevant, developmentally-appropriate participatory activities that may include community resources such as local farms, and other organizations that promote healthy eating.
- Share nutrition information with families consistent with the information being taught in schools to engage and support families as partners in nutrition education.
- Provide information and training for educators and other staff on available resources.
- Emphasize the importance of the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) and composting.

District Guidelines on Foods and Food Practices

The health and well-being of all students is the ultimate goal. For students with health concerns and life-threatening food allergies, the nurse will maintain a healthcare plan. Decisions regarding controlled food choices, no food, or food restrictions rest with the nurse and shall reflect District policies and guidelines.

Food Usage or Distribution at School

The District shall comply with current federal and state nutrition regulations in promoting, selling and providing all foods and beverages to students, which is prohibited 30 minutes before the start of the school day until 30 minutes after the school day ends. This includes fundraising activities involving food.

- Soda and candy will not be provided to students in school.

- Food will only be used as a student manipulative in lessons when the purpose is *directly related to the curriculum* (i.e. studying onion cells in science). In instances when food plays a required part of the curriculum, staff members shall collaborate with parents and the school nurse to reduce risk and ensure an inclusive experience for all students.
- Whole class or group non-curricular celebrations involving food should be used sparingly.
- Birthday events at school will not involve food.

Physical and Mental Health and Wellness

The safety, health, and wellness of students are the priority of all ABRSD schools. The District employs school nurses who provide assessment, diagnosis, and care for students who are ill, injured or have a chronic medical condition. Nurses administer medications and coordinate with medical providers and families regarding medical conditions. *(For a full description of the role of school nurses, visit the District website and click on Families > Health and Nursing.)*

Prevention and Intervention Services

Each school will have prevention and intervention services which support the physical, mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health of students which will allow greater success in learning. These include:

Prevention services include the school nurse, teachers, and school counselors providing age-appropriate education and strategies for:

- Healthy behaviors that promote wellness, including information regarding nutrition, stress management skills, physical activity, sleep hygiene, meditation and mindfulness,
- The health dangers of certain risky health behaviors including using tobacco, electronic cigarettes and vaping, alcohol and other illicit drugs, and
- Common mental health conditions, ADHD, addiction, anxiety and depression, as well as suicide.

Intervention services provided within each school includes school counselors providing programing and social skills groups. School counselors and school psychologists will also be available to provide assessments and individual or group counseling and consultation. *Postvention services* and supports are also provided to students and staff as needed, in the event of a death by suicide.

School counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists also provide referrals to school and community support organizations as needed (*i.e. Danny's Place Youth Services, etc.*) or mental health services in the community (*i.e. William James Interface, Eliot Human Services, etc.*). Additionally, they work to ensure that services provided in school promote learning, as well as helping staff implement interventions suggested by community physical and/or mental health providers that are appropriate within the school environment.

Physical Activity

- The health, well-being, and safety of all children are the priority of all school programs. Physical activity should be incorporated throughout the school day.
- All elementary schools will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, during which time students will have opportunities for safe physical activity.
- Time allotted for physical activity will be consistent with research, national, and state standards. According to the National Institutes of Health, being active benefits a student's self-esteem, energy level, concentration, and overall emotional wellbeing.
- School personnel will not use physical activity (running, pushups, etc.) as a punishment or arbitrarily withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g. recess) as a punishment.

Districtwide physical education courses are:

- Geared so students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally-appropriate motor skills and knowledge,
- Taught by state-certified physical education instructors,
- Required for all students, unless a medical excuse is documented by the student's physician,
- Held in facilities and with equipment that are safe and adequate, and
- Include instruction of individual activities, as well as competitive and collaborative games and sports, to encourage lifelong physical activity.

Revised: 3/26/09, 6/24/14, 4/10/17, and 1/23/2020