



YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WELLNESS POLICY

PREAMBLE

The Yonkers Public Schools is committed to providing a healthy environment for students and adults within the school setting, recognizing the significance of physical, mental and social well-being in the achievement of academic success.

The District also recognizes the links between academic performance and the food served in schools, health literacy and nutrition education, physical education and physical activity, and environmental awareness.

The District encourages parents to be informed and involved with promoting a lifestyle of good health and full activity for their families.

Together, these objectives set the foundation for a coordinated, comprehensive wellness program that enables students to succeed academically.

The Yonkers Public Schools' Wellness Advisory Committee is comprised of parents, teachers, students, administrators, health professionals and community agency members. The Advisory Committee was established by the Superintendent of Schools to develop and recommend this District Wellness Policy. The Advisory Committee will review and monitor school-based committees, as well as serve and provide resources to each school for implementing these policies.

**YONKERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WELLNESS COMMITTEE**

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DISTRICT GOALS

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- The District will support and encourage all students in grades K – 12 with multiple opportunities for physical activity on a regular basis.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that not only meet student health and nutrition needs, but will also be sensitive to cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning.
- The District will provide students with clean, safe and pleasant meal settings and adequate time to eat.
- Schools will provide both nutrition and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs along with related community services.
- The school district will promote good decision making through character education, Pupil Support staff and special programs.

INTRODUCTION

To promote student wellness and address current health issues, including childhood obesity, the Yonkers Public Schools will provide:

1. Nutritious foods, available at schools during the school day, to promote student health;
2. Physical education and physical activity, to enable students to develop healthy lifetime habits conducive to cardiovascular conditioning, flexibility, coordination, balance and physical strength;
3. Health literacy and nutrition education to equip students to make the most health-enhancing decisions about the food choices available to them, and to understand health-related influences in the environment; and
4. Social/emotional programs, to protect student physical, mental, social and emotional health.

The YPS Wellness Policy establishes objectives in each of these areas, and sets guidelines for how to successfully meet the goals in a coordinated, comprehensive wellness program that enables students to succeed academically.

POLICIES

I. Nutrition Policy: All students will have access to high-nutrient food options and to nutritional information regarding each.

- HEALTHY FOODS:

The Food Service Department will serve food in compliance with the Recommended Dietary Guidelines and USDA standards, satisfying the nutrient requirements for protein, vitamin C, iron, calcium, calories, fat and saturated fat. Food Services will provide foods and beverages that contain moderate to low levels of sodium and simple sugars.

- FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES:

To support student's health and school nutrition- education efforts, school fundraising activities will use only foods that meet nutrition standards. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

- NUTRIOUS SNACKS:

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care and/or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to student's diet and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks. Schools will assess, whether and when, to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, students nutritional needs, student's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of

healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- REWARDS:

It is suggested that schools will try not to use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet nutrition standards, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, it is also suggested that schools will not withhold food or beverages, including food served through school meals, **as a punishment.**

- CELEBRATIONS:

Although celebrations are encouraged, schools should limit celebrations that involve non-nutritious foods during the school day. It is suggested that parties encourage good eating habits by including food and beverages that are nutritionally sound. The district will disseminate a list of healthy celebration/party ideas to parents and teachers.

- PURCHASING POLICY AND NUTRITIONAL DEFINITIONS

A La Carte: Refers to individually priced food items provided by the school food service department. These items may or may not be part of the reimbursable meal.

Competitive Foods: Foods and beverages sold or made available to students that compete with the school's operation of the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and/or After School Snack Program. This definition includes, but is not limited to, food and beverages sold or provided in vending machines, in school stores or as part of school

fundraisers. School fundraisers include food sold by school administrators or staff (principals, coaches, teachers, etc.), students or student groups, parents or parent groups, or any other person, company or organization.

FMNV: Food of Minimal Nutritional Value. Refers to the four categories of foods and beverages (soda water, water ices, chewing gum, and certain candies) that are restricted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under the child nutrition programs. Federal regulations prohibit the sale of certain foods, determined to be of minimal nutritional value, in the foodservice area (cafeteria, outside cafeteria) during meal periods.

1. Soda water: Any carbonated beverage containing sugar or sugar substitute otherwise known as soda or diet soda, respectively. No product shall be excluded from this definition because it contains discrete nutrients added to the soda water such as vitamins, minerals and protein

2. Water Ices: Any frozen, sweetened water such a "...sicles" and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain a minimum of 25% fruit or fruit juice.

3. Chewing Gum: any flavored products from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass of chewing

4. Certain Candy: A processed food made predominately from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners with a variety of minor ingredients that characterize the following types:

(a) hard candy: a product made predominately from sugar (sucrose) and corn syrup that may be flavored and colored, and is characterized by a hard, brittle texture. Includes such items as sour balls, lollipops, fruit balls, candy sticks, starlight mints, after dinner mints, jaw breakers, sugar wafers, rock candy, cinnamon candies, breath mints and cough drops.

(b) jellies and gums: a mixture of carbohydrates that are combined to form a stable gelatinous system of jellylike character and are generally flavored and colored, and include gum drops, jelly beans, jellied and fruit flavored slices.

(c) Marshmallow Candies: an aerated confection composed of sugar, corn syrup, invert sugar, 20 percent water and gelatin or egg white to which flavors and colors may be added.

(d) Fondant: a product consisting of microscopic-sized sugar crystals that are separated by a thin film of sugar and/or invert sugar in solution such as candy corn or soft mints.

(e) Licorice: A product made predominately from sugar and corn syrup that is flavored with an extract made from the licorice root.

(f) Spun Candy: A product that is made from sugar that has been boiled at high temperatures and spun at a high speed in a special machine.

(g) Candy Coated Popcorn: Popcorn that is coated with a mixture made predominately from sugar and corn syrup.

Exemptions:

1. School Nurses: This policy does not apply to school nurses using FMNVs during the course of providing health care to individual students.

2. Accommodating Students with Special Needs: Special Needs Students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan indicates the use of a FMNV or candy for behavior modification (or other suitable need) may be given FMNV or candy items.

3. School Events: Students may be given FMNV, candy items or other restricted foods during the school day for up to three different events, such as a bake sale, each school year to be determined by campus. The exempted events must be approved by a school official. During these events, FMNV may not be sold/given during meal times in the areas in or directly outside and regular meal service (breakfast and lunch) must continue to be available to all students in accordance with federal regulations.

4. Instructional Use of Food in Classroom: for instructional purposes, teachers may use foods as long as the food items are not considered FMNV or candy. Students may consume food prepared in class for

instructional purposes. However, this should be on an occasional basis, and food may not be provided or sold to other students or classes. Food provided for students as part of a class or school cultural heritage event for instructional or enrichment purposes would be exempt from the policy. However, FMNV may not be served during meal periods in the areas where school meals are being served or consumed, and regular meal service (breakfast and Lunch) must continue to be available to all students.

5. Athletic, Band and Other Competitions: The nutrition policy does not apply to students who leave campus to travel to athletic, band or other competitions. The school day is considered to have ended for these students. School activities, athletic functions, etc. that occur after normal school day are not covered by the policy.

This policy does not restrict what parents may provide for their own child's lunch or snacks. Parents may provide FMNV or candy items for their own child's consumption, but they may not provide restricted items to other children at school. It is our hope that, through our nutritional information and education provided for parents, they will provide their children with healthy snacks.

Snack suggestions for snack time and all special occasions:

- Raisins

- Sandwiches cut into fourths or in different shapes with a cookie cutter, tuna, peanut butter, honey, cheese, etc. on various kinds of bread.
- Different baked breads (banana, carrot, etc.)
- Nutritious muffins (oatmeal, carob)
- Yogurt
- Cheese cubes
- Applesauce
- Vegetables and fruits (cut to child's finger size)
- Dips (not too runny)
- Crackers and cheese

Food Service: refers to the school's operation of the National School Lunch Program, School breakfast Program and After School Snack Programs and includes all food service operations conducted by the school principally for the benefit of school children, all of the revenue from which is used solely for the operation or improvement of such food services.

Fried foods: foods that are cooked by total immersion into hot oil or other fat, commonly referred to as "deep fat frying." This definition does not include foods that are stir-fried or sautéed.

Fruit or Vegetable "Drink": Beverages labeled as containing fruit or vegetable juice in amounts less than 100 percent.

Fruit or Vegetable "Juice": Beverages labeled as containing 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.

School Day: the school day begins with the start of the first breakfast period and continues until the end of the last instruction period of the day (last bell).

School Meals: Meals provided under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and After School Snack Program for which schools receive reimbursement in accordance with applicable federal regulations, policies, instructions and guidelines.

Snacks: Defined as either competitive foods or a la carte, depending on whether or not they are provided by the school food service department.

Trans Fat: Occurs in foods when manufacturers use hydrogenation, a process in which hydrogen is added to vegetable oil to turn the oil into a more solid (saturated) fat. Trans fats may be found in such foods as margarine, crackers, candies, cookies, snack food, fried, foods, baked goods, salad dressings and other processed foods.

HEALTHY NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT

All school cafeterias and dining areas should be healthy nutrition environments. Yonkers Public Schools participating in federal child nutrition programs should ensure that all students have daily access to school meals (breakfast and lunch). Schools should not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict meal access.

Adequate time should be allowed for students to receive and consume meals and cafeterias should provide a pleasant dining environment. The minimum recommended eating time for each student after being served is at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch.

II. **Physical Education and Physical Activity Policy:** All students will engage in daily recommended levels of physical activity.

- Physical Education is required for all students. The school district will make every effort to follow national and state recommendations by grade level or per staffing allotment.
- Daily recess for students in grades PK-5 is required as part of student lunchtime activity and for at least 20 minutes in each grade. Recess is defined as unstructured playtime that is supervised by adults, but not directed by adults.
- Physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher and be an essential part of every school's instructional program, subject to differing student abilities. The physical education program will stress the importance of physical fitness and encourage healthy lifestyles.
- Physical education will follow the New York State Standards for enhancing physical activity and good healthy choices.
- **Physical Activity and Punishment:** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

III. **Health Literacy Policy:** In addition to health and fitness, which is fundamental to physical education programs, secondary students will also be taught comprehensive principles of nutrition and health implications, media literacy, an appreciation of healthy food and other competencies essential to making health-enhancing choices. Strategies will include:

- Incorporating health literacy education into all core curriculum area classroom instruction comprehensive concepts on health-enhancing behaviors and risk factor reduction for lifestyle disease prevention.
- Training students to differentiate between marketing messages and substantive health information.
- Promoting healthy food choices on school premises by making relevant nutrition information available as close as possible to the point of choice.

IV. **Good Decision Making Policy:** Schools will emphasize the importance of goal-setting and positive decision-making strategies.

- All students will have access to social and emotional resources including programs as they relate to Character Education.
- All students will have access to Pupil Support Staff (School Psychologist, Social Worker, guidance counselor, nurse)
- Students will be taught effective, interpersonal communication skills.

- Students will be taught advocacy skills and strategies for personal choices that include family and community decisions.

V. School Based Wellness Committee: Each school will develop a School Based Wellness Committee. The committee should be comprised of administrators, teachers, parents (other than staff), students (where applicable), Pupil Support team members, and CSEA workers (i.e. nurse, office staff, food service worker, and custodian). The committee will meet at least three times a year to discuss the implementation of district goals and activities tailored specifically to each individual school. Each School Based Wellness Committee will report annually to the Superintendent's Wellness Advisory Committee about the school's activities and how the school implemented district's goals.

VI. Communications with Parents: The district/school will support parental efforts to provide students with a healthy diet and daily physical activity. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks. The district/school will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards along with ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities that are provided before, during, and after the school day, and support parental efforts to provide children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through the District website, newsletters, or other take-home materials, special events, and/or a physical education calendar.

VII. Staff Wellness: The district will offer information to our staff concerning health literacy, nutrition, physical activities, and mental, social and emotional care.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Superintendent's Wellness Advisory Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring the District's Wellness Policy in accordance with District goals and initiatives, ensuring high academic achievement through the enhanced wellness curriculum and via programs to improve the health of all students.

The Superintendent's designee (Chairperson of the Yonkers Public Schools Wellness Advisory Committee), will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activities wellness policies. In the school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in their school and will report on the school's compliance to the Wellness Advisory Committee

The goals, objectives and guidelines of the Yonkers Public Schools Wellness Policy will be reviewed annually. Recommendations to the Superintendent by the Wellness Advisory Committee will address responses to changing conditions, will consider more effective techniques and proven strategies, will incorporate new objectives if needed, and will ensure that the guidelines reflect emerging scientific knowledge relevant to our student health.