



Whitman-Hanson Regional School District

WELLNESS POLICY

The Whitman-Hanson School District (WHRSD) promotes health and wellness for the school community. The school district recognizes that strong physical, mental, and social health, including good nutrition and physical activity is significant to students' wellbeing and capacity to develop their full potential as 21st century learners. It is the intent of this policy to afford all students the opportunity to fully participate and benefit from the education process and develop lifelong wellness practices.

Ongoing activities to assess, plan, implement, promote, and evaluate student and staff wellness will be supported and maintained. The approach includes, but is not limited to, ensuring a safe and healthy school environment, school nursing and other related health services, school counseling and mental health services, coordinated health and physical education programs, and promoting sound nutrition and healthy eating behaviors. The school district is committed to providing a safe environment for students with life threatening food allergies. The Whitman-Hanson Schools follow the current federal, state, and local statutes and regulations governing health and wellness.

WHRSD supports a Wellness Policy that provides opportunities to educate its school community in healthy behaviors that reinforce lifelong health and wellness. The school district will encourage community partnerships that assist in this effort.

Guiding Principles:

WHRSD shall establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication and monitoring of the Wellness Policy. This will be a collaborative effort to include stakeholders such as district and school administration, staff members, students, families, and community representatives to ensure engagement and involvement between school and other settings to maximize the impact of wellness programming. Whitman-Hanson School District will implement a comprehensive plan addressing health and wellness that includes:

1. An overall school environment that encourages students to make healthy lifestyle choices in regard to eating habits and physical activity. WHRSD recognizes that optimal health looks different for every individual and therefore strives to help students develop a personal healthy relationship with all foods and offer a diverse selection of physical

- activities for students to participate in.
2. All students shall receive standards-based health, nutrition, and physical education that provides students with learning experiences that will help them develop the skills they need to live a healthy and well-rounded lifestyle.
 3. WHRSD shall implement a nutrition and physical education program that equitably serves the needs and interests of all students and staff, while carefully taking into consideration cultural norms.
 4. All students shall have opportunities to be physically active. Grades PK- 5 will have sufficient recess time to provide students social development opportunities and expend energy in a safe environment.
 5. All students shall have access to healthy foods and drinkable water throughout the school day. Food offerings will be in compliance with the Massachusetts and USDA Food and Beverage Nutrition Standards.
 6. Neither food nor physical activity opportunities shall be used to motivate or punish students.
 7. WHRSD shall provide pleasant eating areas for students and staff with adequate time for unhurried eating.
 8. WHRSD shall ensure that all students have access to strategies and supports to develop knowledge and skills for social emotional health.
 9. All students shall have access to health services to support students with chronic medical conditions, first aid, and promote wellness through school-based nursing staff.
 10. WHRSD shall ensure that students and staff with wellness-related health problems are referred to appropriate services for counseling or medical treatment.

The District Wellness Committee will ensure that the Guiding Principles, and any established goals, are met. Said committee will convene at least four (4) times per school year and they will be responsible for reviewing/revising the Wellness Policy at least every three (3) years using the Wellness School Assessment Tool-Implementation (WellSAT-3). Based on the results of the assessment, the committee will develop recommendations for the Superintendent and the School Committee to review and update/change the policy if needed.

FOOD SERVICE

A. Program Requirements

1. During each school day the food service program will provide breakfast and lunch under the national guidelines of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch and Breakfast Program.
2. In accordance with the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and the Massachusetts School Nutrition Bill, the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Food Service Department will offer fresh and nutritious foods that meet the USDA's Food Nutrition Service Standards in all buildings during the school day. The meals served during breakfast and lunch will be wholesome, well balanced, and nutritional, representing 1/3 of the recommended daily allowance based upon age appropriate portions for students K-12.
3. Foods or beverages containing caffeine will not be sold by Food Services.
4. WHRSD will make efforts to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced-price meals and that eligible families are encouraged to apply. The

program will maintain the confidentiality of students and families applying for or receiving free or reduced-price meals.

5. Students with unpaid food balances will never be denied a breakfast or lunch meal. The Director of Food Services will communicate privately with these families and work with them to ensure that their students nutritional needs are being met while at school, regardless of financial hardship.
6. Menus should be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel taking into account students' cultural norms and preferences.
7. Procedures shall be in place for providing families, upon request, information about ingredients and nutritional values of the food served.
8. The food service program is responsible for monitoring the nutrient breakdown of their menus and to assure that the menus offered to students meet the USDA guidelines.

B. Staffing

1. WHRSD will employ a food service director, who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed, according to current USDA professional standards, to administer the food service program and satisfy.
2. WHRSD will employ food service staff that are properly trained according to the recommendations from the Food Service Director.
3. WHRSD nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet continuing education requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals.
4. Food service staff will be trained in allergy prevention and awareness including choke-saver courses. In addition, necessary school personnel will be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of life-threatening allergic reactions and how to respond to medical emergencies that may occur during the school day.

C. Meals/Eating Environment

1. WHRSD will provide a safe and healthy eating environment in all buildings during the school day.
2. All meals served will be in compliance with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards. All snacks offered to WHRSD students will be based on the United States Department of Agriculture's [Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools](#).
3. WHRSD Food Services will use local farms and grocers to assure the freshest and highest quality ingredients for its students whenever possible.
4. WHRSD Food Service will continue to work on improving the nutritional quality and student acceptance of school meals by developing new culturally relevant recipes, giving students as many choices as possible, focusing on food presentation, and giving students opportunities to sample new foods.
5. Students and staff shall have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and shall have at least 20 minutes to eat.
6. Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand washing should be available during all meal periods. Free, safe, and unflavored drinking water will be available during the school day, and extended day.
7. WHRSD Food Service will send out surveys to students/families in order to assess student/family satisfaction with meal offerings and overall service provided.

SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT

A. Competitive Foods & Beverages

Food and beverages sold on school grounds during the normal school day (defined as midnight prior to the start of school until 30 minutes after dismissal) will meet the nutrition regulations (105CMR225) and guidelines set by USDA, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). This includes but is not limited to celebrations and events; vending machines; school stores; PTO, sports or club fundraising where food is consumed within the normal school day; and cafeteria a la carte items.

At Whitman and Hanson Middle School and Whitman-Hanson High School, foods sold or served to students during the school day should be procured through the Whitman-Hanson Food Service Department, any items not procured in this manner must be approved by the building principal and building nurse. All foods served or sold that are not procured through the Whitman-Hanson Food Service Department must be clearly labeled with all included ingredients, as many students have allergies or other health conditions affected by food.

At Conley, Duval and Indian Head Schools, all food served during the school day must be procured through the Food Service Department. Exceptions may only be made for PTO sponsored events and must be approved by the building principal and building nurse. All foods served that are not procured through the Whitman-Hanson Food Service Department must be clearly labeled with all included ingredients, as many students have allergies or other health conditions affected by food.

The nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold during the school day are outlined [HERE](#). Foods and beverages must comply with whichever standard (state or federal) is stricter.

B. Nutrition Promotion & Food and Beverage Marketing

1. Marketing of foods and beverages on the school campus during the school day is limited to only those foods and beverages that meet USDA Smart Snack nutrition standards.
2. WHRSD will implement the following practices to promote the marketing of healthy, nutritious foods:
 - Use daily announcements to promote and market menu options
 - Make sliced or cut fruit available daily
 - Display daily fruit options in the line of sight and within reach of students
 - Give creative or descriptive names to available vegetable options
 - Place white milk in front of other beverages in all coolers
 - Highlight alternative entree options (e.g., salad bar or yogurt parfaits) on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
 - Conduct student surveys and taste testing opportunities and use them to inform menu development

C. Fundraising

1. In school fundraising is only permitted at the middle and high school levels.
2. Organizations are encouraged to hold non-food fundraisers. Any food-based fundraisers must be held outside of school hours (defined as midnight before to 30

minutes after the school day ends). All food items should have ingredients clearly displayed, as we have many students that have life-threatening food allergies and/or other conditions affected by food.

3. All fundraisers must be approved by the building principal

D. Rewards/Celebrations/Snacks

1. School staff will not use food as an incentive or a reward for student accomplishments involving attendance, behavior, or academic performance.
2. In school celebrations for holidays, birthdays, etc., are not to include food. Non-food celebration items such as stickers, pencils, etc. are acceptable.
3. Some classrooms at the elementary level will be designated as “Nut Safe” environments. Letters will be sent home at the beginning of the school year to all families that have students in these classrooms. Students in the “Nut Safe” classrooms cannot bring in snacks that are nuts, contain nuts, may contain nuts, or have been processed in a facility that contains nuts.
4. WHRSD encourages families to partner with them to promote healthy food choices and to consider nutritional quality when selecting snack options to send to school with their students.

E. Life-Threatening Allergies

1. WHRSD provides yearly mandated staff training in life-threatening allergy prevention and awareness. Staff members are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of life-threatening allergic reactions and how to respond to allergy emergencies that may occur during the school day, including EpiPen use.
2. WHRSD has established [Life-Threatening Allergies Management Guidelines](#). These guidelines are designed to ensure that the environment of the Whitman-Hanson Public Schools is as safe as reasonably possible for students who experience life-threatening allergies.

F. Health Promotion and Staff Modeling

1. All school staff will promote a school environment supportive of healthy eating & physical activity
2. All school staff are encouraged to model healthy eating habits including using foods and beverages that meet [Smart Snack standards](#).

NUTRITION EDUCATION

WHRSD strives to provide nutrition education at all grade levels by integrating it into other subjects and having it as part of health education. Students will gain the knowledge and skills to select a diet that supports health and reduces the risk of illness and future chronic diseases in accordance with state standards.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY and PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A. Physical Activity

1. WHRSD shall provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students.

2. Classroom teachers will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to incorporate movement as part of the classroom activities and provide short physical activity breaks between lessons and classes.
3. WHRSD prohibits the use or withholding of physical activity as a punishment. This includes physical education class and recess.
4. Recognizing the need and value in unstructured physical activity, Whitman-Hanson supports daily recess for students in grades K-5. These students will receive at least 20 minutes of recess daily to provide opportunities for social development in a safe environment and to expend physical energy, in order to increase alertness in the classroom. Whitman-Hanson additionally encourages opportunities for outdoor time for students in grades 6-12.
5. Recess should be held outdoors unless the temperatures or weather conditions are deemed unsafe.
6. All students in grades K-12 will participate in a sequential, developmentally appropriate physical education program.
7. Consistent with the Massachusetts Curriculum frameworks, the physical education program will promote the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to foster life-long enjoyment and participation in physical activity for wellness.
8. WHRSD will encourage relationships between families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity.
9. Encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity such as promoting the Safe Routes to School program for those students that live within a walkable/bikeable distance to school.
10. After school programs will be encouraged to provide options that provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for students.
11. WHRSD will encourage the offering of opportunities for students to participate in physical activity before and/or after the school day through a variety of methods including: Physical activity clubs such as walking/running clubs, after-school programs that provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for students, and intramurals or interscholastic sports at both the middle school and high school.

B. Physical Education

The Physical Education curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Health Literacy Frameworks and working towards alignment with the National Physical Education Standards (SHAPE). The goal of physical education is to develop physically-educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

Each physical education teacher is state-certified and follows a curriculum which is age-appropriate, sequential, consistent with national and state standards, and promotes the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and helps students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits.

1. Physical Education will be a required subject K-12.
2. Elementary: 75 minutes per week, full year; Middle: 90 minutes per week, $\frac{2}{3}$ of the year; High: grades 9-10 - 120 minutes/week, $\frac{1}{2}$ year, grades 11-12 - 80 minutes per week, $\frac{1}{2}$ year
3. All Physical Education teachers in the district will receive professional development

- in physical education.
4. Waivers are granted for junior and senior varsity athletes, those who have a gym membership and decisions made by administration to meet a student's medical or social emotional needs.
 5. All students regardless of their ability are integrated into Physical Education class throughout the district.

HEALTH EDUCATION

WHRSD is committed to having students participate in a comprehensive health education program that is appropriate to students' developmental level, personal behaviors, cultural background, and community standards. The comprehensive health education program builds upon functional knowledge with an emphasis on learning and practicing skills for lifelong healthy living.

The Comprehensive Health Program will be taught by state certified health educators and align with Massachusetts Health Curriculum Frameworks and the National Health Education Standards. The curriculum will address the physical, mental, social, and emotional dimensions of wellness through health information about disease prevention, health related risk behaviors, personal, family, community, and environmental concerns. Students will set personal goals that enhance their health and reduce health-related risks. Standards for nutrition education and physical activity will also be supported and integrated into the curriculum.

The curriculum will be assessed regularly and re-aligned with data from Youth Risk Behavior Surveys to reduce at-risk behaviors as they relate to the health and well-being of the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District student.

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

WHRSD recognizes that students need to be healthy and safe in order to learn. Certified school nurses will provide comprehensive school health services to appraise, protect, and promote healthy choices that will lead to lifelong wellness practices. Health services may include emergency care, medication administration, health screenings, student and staff health education, surveillance and notification of contagious diseases, nursing case management, referrals to prevent and control disease, and referrals for counseling and access to information. The school nurses comply with all Department of Public Health standards and regulations and act as the health liaison between students, parents/guardians, and the medical community.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

The WHRSD will maintain programs and services provided by state certified counselors and psychologists who support and value the social and emotional wellbeing of students, families, and staff which will build a healthy school environment. Access to these programs and services promote academic achievement by supporting students' mental, emotional, and social health.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMMITTEE

The Whitman-Hanson Health and Wellness Committee provides oversight of the Wellness Policy and regulations and is the means of assessing and promoting a healthy environment for Whitman-Hanson School District. The Health and Wellness Committee should include representation from a cross section of school personnel, students, and interested community stakeholders. The Superintendent, along with the Principal of each school, shall be responsible for implementation of this Wellness Policy and of the standards addressing, health, wellness, nutrition, and physical activity. The Committee will meet quarterly and report to the School Committee annually.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

WHRSD will provide disposable menstrual products to all individuals that menstruate. These products will be free and easily accessible to all that need them. At the middle school and high school, menstrual products will be available in all female bathrooms, gender neutral bathrooms, and in the nurse's office. At the elementary level, menstrual products will be available in the nurse's office.

RESOURCES

The following resources were used in the development of the Whitman-Hanson Wellness Policy:

- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework
- Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools
- Massachusetts Bureau of Community Health and Prevention: School Health Services
- United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service: Team Nutrition ● Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Whitman-Hanson Regional Schools Wellness Committee
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Schools: Smart Snacks and School Vending Machines

Revised: May 25, 2023 by the WH Wellness Committee