

Abington Public Schools Wellness Policy
on Nutrition and Physical Activity

This policy is based on Massachusetts standards that apply to competitive foods and beverages sold or provided to students 30 minutes before the beginning of the school day until 30 minutes after the school day ends (foods and beverages sold in vending machines must comply with the standards at all times). It also conforms to Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-29. These Massachusetts standards and Federal regulations went into effect on August 1, 2012 unless otherwise noted subsequent to this publication.

Purpose and Goals

The Abington Public Schools are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Abington Public Schools that:

- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>).
- Qualified child nutrition professionals (School Food Service Director) will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, all schools in our district will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.
- The Abington Public Schools will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Wellness Advisory Committees

The school district and/or individual schools within the district will work with the Wellness Advisory Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. The Wellness Advisory Committee consists of a group of

individuals representing the school and community, and will include the Food Services Director, Wellness Director, School Committee members, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, parents, students, and members of the public.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

Meals served through the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk, and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA);
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain;
- schools will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information *is* made available on menus, websites, cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials;
- carb count menus will be made available to everyone on the district's website and posted in cafeterias.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling

- will provide students with ideally 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch (http://nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/natsandbytopics.php);
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will ideally schedule lunch periods *to* follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks;

- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

Elementary Schools: The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. Foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle and High Schools: In middle and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain 100% fruit juice (4 oz) and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- Not allowed: By law, soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 100% real fruit juice (4 oz) or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

Refer to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mass-in-motion-improving-school-nutrition>
John Stalker A-List, <https://johnstalkerinstitute.org/resources/school-snacks/alist/>

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

Portion Sizes

Refer to <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mass-in-motion-improving-school-nutrition> **or**
the John Stalker A-List, <https://johnstalkerinstitute.org/resources/school-snacks/alist/>

Fundraising Activities.

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. All foods used for fundraising purchases must be packaged by a manufacturer with nutrition information available. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and any allergy-related issues in the building or classroom. Parents will be encouraged to provide appropriate healthy snacks. Healthy snack lists will be made available to families at the beginning of the school year to assist them in their food choices. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/mass-in-motion-improving-school-nutrition> or <https://johnstalkerinstitute.org/resources/school-snacks/alist/>

Rewards

Schools will limit foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations

Schools will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Abington Public Schools aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- 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;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (food or beverages provided to students outside of the reimbursable school meals program 30 minutes before the beginning of the school day until 30 minutes after the school day ends with foods and beverages sold in vending machines must comply with the standards at all times). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged. All snacks or ala carte items will come from, or meet the guidelines put forth in the Stalker-A-List. <https://johnstalkerinstitute.org/resources/school-snacks/alist/>

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures,

and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities. Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education in accordance with Massachusetts Frameworks.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/health/1999/1099.pdf> All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. PreK-6 students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. All elementary, middle, and high schools will attempt to offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, will also offer interscholastic sports programs where possible. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

After-school child care and enrichment programs will provide and encourage, verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities, daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

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.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (ideally 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class.

Toward that end:

- classroom health education should complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and
- to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. Regulations regarding the use of school facilities are outlined in the Abington Public Schools Joint Use Policy.

Communications with Parents

Abington Public Schools will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will provide nutrition information and nutrient analyses of school menus on school websites. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents with a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/school-nutrition-guide.pdf> or
<http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/alist/alist.pdf>

The district/school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring: The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In each school, the principal will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

The Food Service Director will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Assessments will be repeated every three years by the Wellness Advisory Committee to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review its' nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

The Wellness Director will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school committee and also distributed to the Wellness Advisory Committee, school councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

*Approved by the
Abington School Committee
May 24, 2022*