

# **Amesbury Public Schools Wellness Policy**

The mission of the Amesbury Public Schools is to provide the environment and resources that enable all students to achieve success in reaching their emotional, intellectual, and physical potential.

The Amesbury Public Schools will:

- Ensure that all students have access to healthy food choices during the school day.
- Provide a pleasant dining environment for students and staff.
- Allow a minimum of 20 minutes during their lunch period for students to sit and eat their lunch and socialize in the designated cafeteria/dining area. A 30 minute lunch period is recommended when possible.
- Provide all students the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices for a lifetime.
- In an effort to promote health and wellness, the Amesbury Public Schools will review how nutritious food choices can be incorporated into the curriculum.
- Teachers and staff will not use food as a reward or punishment for students. When food is used in the classroom as part of the academic program, all foods shall comply with the competitive food standards listed below.
- Ensure all personnel review School Committee Policy JLCDD Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in the Educational Environment annually.
- Promote and facilitate the practice of making good nutritional choices through a plan that focuses on reducing access to non-nutritional items and educating students about healthy foods.
- The opportunity to participate in physical activity, including recess, will not be withheld from students as a punishment for misbehavior unless student safety is a concern.
- The opportunity to participate in physical activity, including recess, will not be withheld from students as an opportunity to complete make up work
- Ensure that marketing on the school campus will be limited to those products that are allowed to be sold according to the district's nutrition standards for competitive foods.
- Food-based classroom celebrations, parties, events etc. will not be permitted

## **I. School Meals Program:**

Foods or beverages provided as part of the National School Breakfast Program, or the National School Lunch Program shall comply with Federal Guidelines. Nutrition services policies and guidelines for reimbursable meals shall not be more restrictive than federal and state regulations require. Food Service personnel will take into consideration cultural norms and preferences of students, family members, and other school personnel when planning menus. This may include meeting with student or parent groups, taste tests, food panels and other informational programs regarding nutrition and how it coincides with the school meal program. The district will purchase local foods and source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers where practical, when available, and when prices fall within budgetary constraints. Amesbury Public Schools will allow a minimum of 20 minutes during their lunch period for students to sit and eat their lunch and socialize in the designated cafeteria/dining area. Food in the cafeteria will be displayed in an appealing manner to encourage students to choose nutritious meals. Other promotions may include posters, signage, and highlighting healthy items on the menu during morning announcements. Periodically, students may also take part in food demonstrations and/or tastings to ensure flavor/taste appeal for new, nutritious meal options.

Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast. All schools within the district will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program>).

The district's use of a point-of-sale program shall protect the overt identification of all students and store free and reduced eligibility status in a confidential manner.

All school meals will feature a variety of age-appropriate healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, and of high quality. School meals will be prepared in a way that maximizes nutrient density and reduces fat and sodium. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to support a healthy school environment by providing a variety of nutritious foods if meals or snacks are sent from the home.

All food and nutrition services staff members will complete annual training in accordance with USDA Professional Standards. Information about the Massachusetts School Nutrition Program can be found here (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/nprograms/>) and USDA's National School Lunch program here (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp>) .

The Amesbury School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious and appropriately timed meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any

impact on students with meal charges. Food pricing strategies for retail food items will be comparable to retail pricing in the community. Prices for meals are in compliance with district policies. Families can access directions and applications for Free & Reduced meals on the district's website and hard copies are available at each school. Notices will be sent at the beginning of each year and posted in local newspapers.

Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The School Committee will provide a regular (reimbursable) meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money. No student will ever be refused a meal due to inability to pay. Negative balances will not be discussed with students and will be discussed with parents/guardians only.

Students will have access to free, potable drinking water in each cafeteria during meal times and throughout the school day.

## **II. Competitive Foods:**

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages sold or provided in:

1. School cafeterias offered as a la carte items
2. School buildings, including classrooms and hallways
3. School stores
4. School snack bars
5. Vending machines (must comply 24 hours/day)
6. Concession stands
7. Booster sales
8. Fundraising activities
9. School-sponsored or school-related events
10. Any other location on school property

Competitive foods, including "A la carte offerings" to students, shall be nutritious and comply with USDA school nutrition regulations as linked and footnoted below and Commonwealth of Massachusetts school nutrition regulations as linked and footnoted below. In cases where the USDA and Massachusetts school nutrition regulations differ, the stricter standard shall be required. A comparison is linked here and footnoted below. (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-competitive-foods-and-beverages-at-a-glance-chart/download>). These regulations apply to "foods and beverages sold from midnight before to 30 minutes after the official school day."

No foods or beverages containing caffeine shall be sold or served to students at school.

Organizations affiliated with the Amesbury Public Schools and any other after-school events held on school grounds are required to follow these standards when foods/beverages are offered from midnight before until 30 minutes after the official school day ends. They are encouraged to also follow these standards when offering foods/beverages outside of the 30-minute time period. Exemptions can be discussed with the school Principal on a case by case basis if an IEP is involved.

### **III. Nutrition Education:**

Students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of nutrition education learning experiences in their health education courses. Nutrition education will also be integrated into other subjects as applicable and linked to the school food environment. Nutrition education also addresses agriculture and the food system. Nutrition education lessons are designed using instructional techniques and strategies to promote healthy eating. Nutrition education lessons are based on the most recent dietary guidelines for Americans developed by the USDA and are age-appropriate based on the Massachusetts Health Education Curriculum Framework Standards. In nutrition education, students will gain an understanding of the following:

- Nutrition knowledge: including but not limited to the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements and safe food preparation, handling, and storage.
- Nutrition-related skills: including but not limited to planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutrition information and commercial food advertising. Students will be confident in making nutritious food choices.

### **IV. Health Education:**

The Amesbury Public Schools will strive to provide Health Education skills and concepts as part of the regular instructional program and will strive to provide the opportunity for all students to understand and practice concepts and skills related to health promotion and disease prevention.

- In grades K-10 an age-appropriate, comprehensive, and sequential skill-based health education program based upon state and national standards shall be implemented.
- In grades K-5 units of study include: safety and injury prevention, interpersonal relationships, bullying and violence prevention, physical activity

and fitness, nutrition, disease control and prevention, mental health, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, and growth and development.

- In grades 6-10 units of study include all prior units and suicide prevention, sexuality, consent and gender education.

## **V. Physical Education and Activity:**

Physical education and activity are encouraged and courses shall be taught by a Massachusetts certified physical educator. The physical education curriculum for grade K-12 is aligned with the state physical education standards. Physical education and physical activity shall be an essential element of each school's instructional program. The program shall provide the opportunity for all students to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to participate in a lifetime of healthful physical activity. Students will be provided a robust variety of physical education opportunities during the school day to support a wide range of interests and abilities thus working to discourage students from substituting other school or community activities for physical education class time or credit in place of required physical education. The opportunity to participate in physical education will not be withheld from students as a punishment for misbehavior. Physical activity may not be assigned to students as a consequence of poor behavior or punishment for any reason. (Example: running laps or jogging around a playground).

### **Physical Education Program:**

The physical education program shall be designed to highlight physical fitness and encourage healthy, active lifestyles. The physical education program shall consist of physical activities of at least moderate intensity and for a duration that is sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students, subject to the differing abilities of students.

- Participation in such physical education activity shall be required for all students in kindergarten through grade five. An average of approximately 35 minutes, no less than once per week, is recommended.
- Instruction will be provided for grades 6-8 through formal physical education courses, integration into other courses, regularly scheduled intramural activities, and/or regularly scheduled school-wide activities. An average of approximately 70 minutes per week is recommended.
- Amesbury High School shall require four credits of Physical Education/Health for graduation.

- Students shall be supported in setting and striving towards personal fitness goals that result in the achievement and maintenance of a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
- Schools may not allow students to be exempt from required physical activity (example: recess) class time or credit, unless exemptions are due to disability, religious, or medical reasons.

### **Additional Physical Activity Programs:**

The Amesbury Public Schools supports and encourages physical activity and movement for all students and community members in addition to the physical education programs offered to Amesbury Public School students during the school day.

- Recommended schools provide at least 20 minutes of active daily recess to all elementary students.
- Physical activity opportunities may include families and community members where appropriate (e.g. 5k walks, runs, events)
- General education teachers should provide students with physical activity breaks when possible.
- Schools should promote walking and biking to school when possible

## **VI. Healthy and Safe Environment:**

A healthy and safe environment for all, before, during, and after school supports academic success. Safe communities promote healthier students. Healthier students do better in school and make greater contributions to their community.

- School and district offices shall maintain an environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.
- Safety procedures and appropriate training for students and staff shall support personal safety and violence and harassment-free environments.
- Each worksite, school, and classroom shall work to create an environment where students, parents/guardians, and staff are respected, valued, and accepted with high expectations for personal behavior and accomplishments.

## **VII. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):**

The Amesbury Public Schools utilizes a multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) to provide high quality, evidence-based instruction and interventions in the core competencies of

SEL including: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision -Making, Social Awareness, and Relationship Skills.

The District's approach to implementing SEL includes:

- Programming to develop positive, equitable, and inclusive school climates and cultures
- Direct instruction for SEL skill acquisition integrated in both unit and lesson plans for all classes.
- Appropriate integration of SEL strategies into academic work, and extracurricular activities
- Universal and targeted interventions designed to support students in acquiring skills.

The Amesbury Public Schools offer a variety of curricular and non-curricular programs to help all students acquire SEL skills. At the elementary level, these include but are not limited to: Responsive Classroom, SEL Lessons, PBIS (positive behavioral interventions and supports) and our district-wide health and physical education program. At the middle school, students participate in Responsive Classroom, and at the secondary level, all students participate in advisory programming as well as developmental guidance, SEL lessons, Responsive Classroom, and our district-wide health and physical education program. Additionally, secondary schools offer a variety of clubs and activities.

### **VIII. Staff Wellness**

The district desires to provide programs promoting healthy eating and physical activity for district staff including activities, programs and health and wellness classes.

### **Advertising on School Property**

- Schools will attempt to limit advertising of unhealthy products in school publications. All ads should be approved by the principal before being printed or included on the school website.
- Busses, building exteriors, scoreboards, etc. on and around school property shall be free of brands and illustrations of unhealthy foods.
- The advertising of foods and beverages that are not available for sale in district schools will not be allowed on any school property.
- Advertising of any brand on containers used to serve food or in areas where food is purchased is prohibited.

- When selecting educational materials for the classroom, every effort will be made to select materials free of brand names/logos and illustrations of unhealthy foods.
- Schools shall avoid participation in programs (fundraising or corporate incentives) that promote a message inconsistent with our goals for a healthy school community.
- Given concerns about student exposure to marketing, district schools will not participate in incentive programs that promote brands or provide children with free or discounted foods or beverages

#### **IX. School Wellness Advisory Committee:**

Members shall include but not be limited to Nurse Leader (Chair), parent (s), student (s), food service director, physical education and health curriculum faculty, and family and consumer science faculty. If possible, representation from administrative, school board and community health professionals is advisable. The committee will meet a minimum of four times per year.

The Board responsible for drafting this revised Wellness Policy shall remain engaged in monitoring the policy's implementation and presenting recommendations to the School Board. Established quality indicators will be used to measure the implementation of the policy. These measures shall include, but not be limited to, an analysis of nutrition education; nutritional content of meals served; student participation rates in school meal programs; any sales of non-nutritious foods and beverages in fundraisers or other venues outside of the District's meal programs; feedback from food service personnel, school administrators, school health councils, parents/guardians, students, and any other appropriate persons; analysis of physical education/activity and wellness communication and promotion. Individual school councils will be encouraged to form a wellness sub-committee.

#### **X. Implementation:**

The Superintendent will be assigned to ensure compliance with standards of this Wellness Policy at a district level. The principal or their designee will be assigned to ensure compliance with standards of this Wellness Policy in their school. The Director of School Food Services will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within the school food service areas.



The wellness committee will conduct an ongoing assessment of the wellness program every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas of improvement. There will be a triennial assessment and analysis of the wellness policy based on WELLSat 3.0 tool. The district will, as necessary, revise the Wellness Policy (ADF) and develop work plans to facilitate its implementation. The wellness policy and assessment results will be made available to the public and posted on the website.

#### Legal References:

- Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010; MGL 223 Ch. 111, 105 CMR 215.00; 42 U.S.C. 11751 (Pub.L. 108-265, Title II and 204, June 30, 2004 118 Stat. 78.0;
- The Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act of 1994, P.L. 103-448, Section 9(b)(2)(C) of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) 42 U.S.C.
- 1751. CFR Part 210 National School Lunch Program

Adopted: 2006

Reviewed: 2009

Revised: 2011

Revised; Adopted: 2024

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<sup>[1]</sup> USDA Smart Snacks

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/allfoods\\_summarychart.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/allfoods_summarychart.pdf)

MA competitive foods:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/105-cmr-225-nutrition-standards-for-competitive-foods-and-beverages-in-public-schools/download>

USDA vs MA comparison of competitive foods and beverages

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-competitive-foods-and-beverages-at-a-glance-chart/download>

MTSS - DESE

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/>