

STUDENT AND STAFF WELLNESS

I. Purpose

Overall wellness and a healthy school environment is essential for staff and for students to achieve their full academic potential, and lifelong health and well-being. The purpose of these administrative regulations is to ensure the Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) provides a coordinated school health and wellness program that includes health education, physical education and physical activity, nutrition environment and services, health services, counseling and psychological services, social services, social and emotional climate, physical environment, employee wellness, family engagement, and community involvement.

II. Background

Each local school system must have a comprehensive school wellness and nutrition policy that contains certain elements as outlined in Section 204 of the Public Law 108-265 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (National School Lunch and Breakfast Program) and reinforced in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Act of 2010.

III. Definitions

- A. Coordinated School Health Council - Advises the Talbot County Board of Education in the development and maintenance of coordinated school health programs.
- B. Nutrition - The taking in and use of food and other nourishing material by the body.
- C. Physical Activity - Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in an expenditure of energy.
- D. Wellness - A dimension of health beyond the absence of disease or infirmity, including social, emotional and spiritual aspects of health.

IV. Procedures

A. District-wide Wellness Team

1. TCPS will maintain an active district-wide Wellness Team composed of representatives from various stakeholder groups including, but not limited to: Administrators and Supervisors, Teachers, Food Services, Parents/Guardians, Students, and Community Organizations in the Health and Wellness fields.
2. The District-Wide Wellness team will meet a minimum of yearly, or more often as needed, to address matters related to the Comprehensive School Wellness and Nutrition Policy.

3. The District-wide Wellness Team will be led by individuals representing departments that include, but are not limited to: Health & Physical Education, Food Services, and Health Services.

B. School-based Wellness Teams

1. All schools will maintain active Wellness Teams composed of representatives from various stakeholder groups that may include, but are not limited to: Administration, Teachers, Food Services, Parents/Guardians, and Students.

2. School wellness teams will develop and implement wellness goals related to the Comprehensive School Wellness and Nutrition Policy. Goals will be included in the School Improvement Plan. School wellness teams will utilize the six-step model of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation to guide their work. The six-step model includes the following process steps: Convene a school wellness council; use the Healthy Schools Inventory to assess your school's current efforts; develop an action plan; identify resources; take action; celebrate successes and monitor progress.

3. Each wellness team will identify a chairperson, preferably someone other than the administrator. The chairperson will participate in professional development opportunities when available and applicable.

C. Nutrition Guidelines

1. All school menus will ensure compliance with federal, state, and local guidelines regarding healthy, nutritious and affordable meals.

2. Nutrition information regarding school meals will be available upon request.

3. Schools should, to the extent possible, discourage students from sharing food and beverages brought from home with one another during meals or snack times, given concerns about allergies and restrictions on some children's diets.

4. All foods sold in schools will meet the Maryland Nutritional Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools. The standards can be found at:

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Documents/MDNutritionStandardsForAllFoodsSold.pdf>

5. All food and beverages made available on campus during the school day (including vending, concessions a la carte, and fundraising) shall comply with Smart Snack guidelines, and Maryland Nutrition Standards for foods and beverages sold during the school day. The standards can be found at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>

6. To support the district-wide wellness efforts, school fundraising activities are encouraged to use items that meet the approved federal, state, and local nutrition standards for foods and beverages. Any fundraising activity must meet the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School. Those standards can be found at

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>

7. Snacks served by school staff during the school day or in afterschool or enrichment programs should, to the extent possible, 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 may access the following resource to address this objective: <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>
8. Schools are encouraged to develop alternatives to the use of food and beverages as rewards/incentives.
9. Schools are encouraged to develop alternatives to the use of food and beverages in celebrations. However, foods and beverages made available at school parties/celebrations, to the extent practicable, will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
10. Schools will not withhold access to school breakfast, lunch, and scheduled daily snacks or beverages as a punishment.
11. Schools will provide access to drinking water throughout the school day and anywhere meals are served. Students are allowed to carry water in an appropriate container throughout the school day.
12. To support the district-wide wellness efforts, schools will access the following link for additional resources and information:
<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/SchoolandCommunityNutrition/Documents/SM2317LWPFinalRuleQAMemo.pdf>

D. Nutrition and Health Education

1. TCPS will teach a curriculum in nutrition education as part of the instructional program in comprehensive health education, in accordance with COMAR 13A.04.18.
2. Nutrition education will be included in health education each year for all students in grades pre-kindergarten through eight, and in a health education program in high school.
3. Nutrition education will be aligned with the Maryland Voluntary Health Education Curriculum.
4. TCPS will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet for their children. Food services and school-based wellness teams may provide nutritional tips, and suggestions for healthy alternatives to foods that do not meet the Federal and State standards for school nutrition.

E. Physical Education & Physical Activity

1. Physical Education – Talbot County Public Schools will develop and implement a curriculum in physical education as part of the system's instructional program in comprehensive physical education, in accordance with COMAR 13A.04.13.
2. Physical Activity

- a. Each elementary school will offer daily recess, preferably outdoors, for grades PK-5, and will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity by appropriately providing space and equipment.
- b. Each middle school will, when possible, offer extracurricular physical activity programs such as clubs and intramurals.
- c. Each high school will offer an interscholastic athletic program in accordance with Policy Code 9.14.
- d. TCPS will limit the restriction of opportunities for physical activity as a consequence for a disciplinary action.

F. Employee Wellness Programs

1. TCPS highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and/or programs that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
2. TCPS will form a committee to evaluate the needs of school system employees, recommend programs, develop various initiatives/incentives that promote staff wellness, and coordinate needed resources for staff wellness. This committee will act as champions of wellness by promoting participation of all employees in healthy lifestyle activities.
3. TCPS will take all measures practicable to provide a healthy workplace that meets all local, State, and Federal guidelines and mandates.

V. Implementation

- A. District Level Implementation - The Superintendent/Designee will oversee school implementation and compliance with this policy by:
 1. Providing assistance and support to schools with implementation of the policy and improving programming functions.
 2. Ensuring schools are offered support services through various departments including Food/Nutrition Services, Health and Physical Education, and other appropriate Curriculum Supervisors/Specialists. They will collaborate with the School Health/Wellness Council to periodically review this policy and its administrative regulations.
 3. Establishing a process to gather regular reporting and feedback from individual schools, community partners, students, and parents on the implementation of the policy.
 4. Conducting periodic evaluations and report on system wide and individual schools' compliance with the policy.
 5. TCPS will have representation, to the extent possible, on various community committees and/or organizations that have efforts and initiatives to promote and foster healthy habits and lifestyles for staff, students, and the community at large.
- B. School Level Implementation

1. Each school principal will ensure that a School Wellness Team is formed annually to spearhead health and wellness initiatives at the school that are in compliance with this policy. The principal will establish a system to annually identify School Wellness Team members which may include parents/guardians, teachers, school nurses/assistants, school administrators, and community health or wellness partners.
2. Each school principal will annually designate a school employee to serve as the School Wellness Champion who will:
 - a. Lead and coordinate the school's efforts to increase healthy eating and physical activity for students and staff.
 - b. Serve as the liaison for their school to the Health/Wellness Council
 - c. Establish and lead a School Wellness Team that develops goals, strategies, and initiatives for student and staff health, wellness, and physical activity during the school year.
 - d. Each school principal will provide annual updates to the Superintendent/Designee regarding the school's health and wellness initiatives and the school's implementation of this policy.

C. Family/Community Collaboration

1. Parents and members of the community may serve on the TCPS Health Council and/or its subcommittees.
2. Parents and members of the community may serve on school level wellness teams.
3. Parents will receive educational resources and encouragement to help their children develop healthy lifestyles through good nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and health education.
4. This regulation and associated policy will be available on the TCPS website, along with other appropriate resources for wellness initiatives and information.