

# Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School

## District Wellness Policy

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# **Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School**

## **District Wellness Policy**

### **Preamble**

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School (hereto referred to as the District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The District believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, emotional, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition, and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods, including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines the District's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the District have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in the District.

## **I. District Wellness Committee (DWC)**

### ***Committee Role and Membership***

The District's intent is to convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC) that (will) meet at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as "wellness policy").

The DWC membership is intended to represent all school levels and includes (to the extent possible) including parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals, and mental health and social services staff; school administrators, school board members; health professionals; and the general public. (See Appendix A) To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

### ***Leadership***

The Executive Director or designee(s) will convene the DWC, facilitate the development of and update the wellness policy, and ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

Each school will designate a wellness policy coordinator to ensure compliance with the policy. Refer to Appendix A for a list of school-level wellness policy coordinators.

## **II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement**

### ***Implementation Plan***

The District will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy.

### ***Recordkeeping***

The District's Wellness Policy is maintained in the office of the District's Executive Director. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public via [akfcs.org](http://akfcs.org)
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy, including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate in the DWC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment of the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

### ***Annual Notification of Policy***

The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy, and implementation status. The District will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. Annually, the District will also publicize the name and contact information of the District/school officials leading and coordinating the committee and information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

### ***Triennial Progress Assessments***

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is the Director of Finance and Operations of the Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School, Alisha Carpino, 10 New Bond Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01606 [arcarpino@akfcs.org](mailto:arcarpino@akfcs.org)

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The District will make the triennial progress report available by posting it on the school's website.

### ***Revisions and Updating the Policy***

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years following the triennial assessment.**

### ***Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications***

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The District will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The District will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

### **III. Nutrition**

#### ***School Meals***

Our school district is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are free under *Community Eligibility Provision* and accessible to all students;
- Meet the USDA school meal nutrition standards, especially for foods and beverages provided during breakfast and lunch periods;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
  - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans).
  - Fresh sliced, cut, or whole fruits are available daily.
  - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in students' line of sight and reach.
  - Vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
  - Daily vegetable and fruit requirements for a reimbursable meal are bundled into all grab-and-go lunches available to students.
  - Students receiving these grab-and-go alternate meals have complete access to the ½ cup serving of hot vegetables and ½ c. serving of fruit offered with the main entrée.
  - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
  - Fat-Free White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
  - Alternative entrée options (i.e., salads, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.

- All reimbursable meals can be created in any service area available to students (i.e., grab-n-go salads, grab-n-go vegetarian options, etc.).
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas.
- Student artwork, if available, is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
- Announcements are used to promote and market menu options, as well as on monthly menus.
- Promotional and informative Materials provided by Project Bread are placed in hallways, sent home with students, and added to the school website as well as social media pages.
- All students will receive a minimum of 20 minutes to sit and eat lunch once the meal is obtained.

The District takes steps to protect the privacy of all students who are categorized as free, reduced, and/or paid meal benefits. All cafeterias are cashless as well as low-balance letters are emailed weekly to parents/guardians. These payments can be processed discreetly online at PaySchoolsCentral.com. All POS terminals are faced away from all students during breakfast and lunch services. With the exception of the high school terminal, which is covered by an anti-glare and privacy filter cover.

Abby Kelley Foster Charter School Food & Nutrition staff members avoid stigmatizing students who are unable to pay for their bill. It is prohibited for students with unpaid balances to be shamed in any way, including announcing student name, using a separate serving line, hand stamp, or sticker of any sort, and giving a notification to a student to send home to parents/guardians.

Nutrition Services will continue to look into USDA farm-to-fresh school programs as seen available to the NSLP and SBP using the <https://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school> website. If implemented, cafeteria staff will create and provide taste tests for locally grown fruits and vegetables.

### ***Staff Qualifications and Professional Development***

All school nutrition and food service directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs. All Nutrition and Food Staff trainings are recorded and managed here: [Dashboard | Professional Standards Training Tracker \(usda.gov\)](#)

### ***Water***

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day\* and throughout every school campus\* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during meal periods.

### ***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus\* during the school day\* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages, vending machines) will meet all federal, state, and local standards for all nutrient and competitive food guidelines. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase the consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information and a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with the implementation of Smart Snacks available at [www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org).

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts. Vending machines will also be unplugged during the school hours and only opened after school has been dismissed. No caffeine products will be permitted for sale to students in any School District buildings.

### ***Celebrations and Rewards***

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. While student handbooks cite that no food from families is allowed, if there ever is a situation where this does happen, the district will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA.
2. Rewards and incentives. The District will provide teachers and other relevant school staff with a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

### ***Fundraising***

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus\* during the school day\*. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [examples from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the USDA].

- *Schools will encourage fundraisers promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).*
- *Fundraising during school hours, on school grounds, will sell non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These fundraisers may include but are not limited to donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy, and pizza sales, market days, etc.*

### ***Nutrition Promotion***

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students. It is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students, and the community.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus and encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

### ***Nutrition Education***

The District will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects when feasible;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs and cafeteria nutrition promotional advertisement; Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- Promotes nutrition education through school clubs and extracurricular activities such as Middle School's Central Perk Cafe
- School gardens are encouraged to promote and facilitate nutritional education.

### ***Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools***

The District is committed to providing a school environment that ensures all students can practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The District strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on District property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the District is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the District to protect and promote students' health by permitting advertising and



marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the District's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written or graphic statement made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.<sup>1</sup> This term includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment, as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by the District.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As the District/school nutrition services/Athletics Department/ PTO/ Booster Club, etc., reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment, and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District wellness policy.

#### **IV. Physical Activity**

Abby Kelley shall align with the [state physical education standards](#) for K-12 curriculum. It is recommended that children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during, and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement, and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. ***Physical Education***

The District will provide students with physical education using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle, help

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students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits and incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunities to participate in physical education classes. The District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

The District physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments.

### ***Recess (Elementary)***

The elementary school (and through grade 5) will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. *This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days.* If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating, and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

**Outdoor recess** will be offered when the weather is feasible for outdoor play.

In the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students to the extent practicable. Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

### ***Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)***

The District recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The District will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

### ***Active Academics***

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The District will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by making background material available on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

### ***Before and After School Activities***

The District offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through various methods. The District will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by providing clubs, sports, and activities when feasible.

## **V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary to the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

### ***Community Partnerships***

The District will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

### ***Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement***

The District will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the District will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the district's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

### ***Staff Wellness and Health Promotion***

The DWC, through the Executive Director, will ensure that the human resources department regularly researches and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness.

Schools in the District will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating, and physical activity behaviors, include ensuring that all staff have an opportunity to take lunch break, provide annual on-site flu vaccination clinics and allow "active time" as appropriate. The District promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

### ***Professional Learning***

When feasible, the District may offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.