

School Wellness Policy

Public School 9

Brooklyn, New York

Background

PS 9 is committed to having each student enter school healthy and to providing a school environment that supports and promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn. PS 9 is committed to encouraging students, students' families, and staff to adopt healthy lifestyle habits, including regular physical activity and a nutritious diet. As one of ten schools chosen by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) for their "Whole Child Network" 3-year comprehensive school improvement process, PS 9 subscribes to the goals of Tenet 1 of the Whole Child Initiative — Healthy:

Each student enters school *healthy* and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

Our school culture supports and reinforces the health and well-being of each student.

Our school health education curriculum and instruction support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of health.

Our school physical education schedule, curriculum, and instruction support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student by addressing lifetime fitness knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills.

Our school facility and environment support and reinforce the health and well-being of each student and staff member.

Our school addresses the health and well-being of each staff member.

Our school collaborates with parents and the local community to promote the health and well-being of each student.

Our school integrates health and well-being into the school's ongoing activities, professional development, curriculum, and assessment practices.

Our school sets realistic goals for student and staff health that are built on accurate data and sound science.

Our school facilitates student and staff access to health, mental health, and dental services.

Our school supports, promotes, and reinforces healthy eating patterns and food safety in routine food services and special programming and events for students and staff.

Preamble and Policy

- Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;
- Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;
- Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;
- Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and
- Whereas a student who feels safe and connected to their school and is properly nourished and healthy has a greater chance of attending school on a regular basis, performing better in the classroom, and becoming a functioning member of the school-community;
- Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Therefore, it is the **policy** of PS 9 that:

- The school will engage students, parents and caregivers, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing its wellness policy.
- All students will have the opportunity, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served during the school day will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *US Dietary Guidelines for Americans*; accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body; and will be provided in a clean, safe, and pleasant setting with adequate time for students to eat.
- Nutrition and physical education will foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education, the school meal program, and with related health, safety and wellness community services.

To Achieve These Policy Goals, PS 9 will implement strategies in the 5 areas below:

- I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on the School Grounds
- II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Communications
- III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education
- IV. School-based Activities and Initiatives Designed to Promote Wellness
- V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Strategies:

- I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on the School Grounds

School Meals

Meals served by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) Office of School Food through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- Meet local, state, and federal requirements for reimbursement;
- Adhere to local, state, and federal regulations and requirements for nutrients; and
- Offer and promote the inclusion of plant-based entrees.

In addition, the school will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch and provide students access to handwashing facilities before they eat meals or snacks. Hand sanitizer will be used, in lieu of hand washing, when necessary.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day and after school should make a positive contribution to children's diets and health.

Rewards. The school will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

School-Sponsored Events. Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside of the school day should include healthier options such as fresh fruits and vegetables, other minimally processed foods, and water or seltzer water.

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and the school's efforts to increase healthy eating and physical activity, fundraising activities that are not associated with food and promote physical activity are encouraged. When food is part of fundraising activities, healthier options such as fresh fruits and vegetables and other minimally processed foods should be available.

Celebrations. School sponsored celebrations in the classroom or on school premises that are not associated with food and promote physical activity are encouraged. When food is part of celebrations healthier options such as fresh fruits and vegetables and other minimally processed foods are encouraged. Drinks with no added sugar such as plain or sparkling water are always provided. When 100% juice is provided, it is served in four to six ounce portions. Distribution of low nutritional value (candy and sugary drinks such as soda and fruit drinks) to children by school staff and parents is prohibited. When sweet treats, such as cakes or cookies are provided, they are provided in small portions such as mini cupcakes or small cookies. Birthday celebrations in the classroom only take place on Fridays.

II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Communications

Nutrition Education and Promotion.

PS 9 aims to provide nutrition education that encourages and supports healthy eating habits and engages 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 science, 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, and other minimally processed, whole foods; 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;
- helps students understand, in a developmentally-appropriate way, the environmental impact of food production and consumption; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Communications with Parents.

The school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus (through NYC DOE Office of SchoolFood), and will provide parents with a suggestion list of snack and celebration foods.

The 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 its website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, or special events.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Activity.

The school will work toward the goal of achieving New York State's education standards for physical education: 1) All students in grades K-3 must receive physical education on a daily basis for a minimum of 120 minutes per week and 2) All students in grades 4–6 must receive physical education not less than three times each week for a minimum of 120 minutes per week. Recess time cannot fulfill these requirements. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess.

All students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which the school will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through verbal instruction and the provision of space and equipment.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 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 will 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 such as dance, fitness breaks, and movement instruction will be incorporated into classroom schedules; and
- classrooms will incorporate active design elements to increase physical activity as much as possible such as wobbly chairs, sensory cushions, bean bags, and an active wall.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School.

The school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs, classes, or intramural programs. The school 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 healthcare needs.

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.*, taking away recess or physical education periods) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.

School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations, as possible. These spaces and facilities will also be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

IV. School-based Activities Designed to Promote Wellness

The entire school community will be involved in creating a school environment that is conducive to health and wellness. In addition to nutrition education and standards, and physical activity, the school will support a coordinated school health approach including:

- considering the school's wellness goals and policy when planning all school-based activities such as field trips, assemblies, and school events;
- supporting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices such as the use of the foods from the school garden and non-disposable/recyclable/compostable trays and tableware;
- having drinking water readily available throughout the day;
- promoting the practice of hand-washing before eating, after bathroom use and physical education class, and other health-related situations as the most effective way to stop the transmission of communicable disease;
- regularly monitoring the bathrooms to ensure that they are clean, that toilets, sinks, doors and hand-dryers are functioning properly, and that they are stocked with adequate soap, toilet paper and paper towel;•
- supporting effective counseling, psychological and social services to address students' and families' issues, to prevent tobacco use, and to identify and refer students who are victims or perpetrators of violence; and
- hosting health screenings and helping to enroll families and eligible children into state-sponsored health insurance programs.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

The PTO Wellness Committee and Whole Child Network Team will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the policy and reporting on the progress of achieving its goals to the school community. The policy and strategies for implementing it will be reviewed yearly and updated as necessary, to reflect the latest science on health and wellness, including the most current *US Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.