



CUTCHINS PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES, INC.

New Directions School

78R Pomeroy Terrace, Northampton, MA 01060

(413) 584-1310 (413) 586-1490 (fax)

NEW DIRECTIONS SCHOOL

Wellness Policy

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the past 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, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints, and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.

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

- We will engage students, parents, teachers, food service coordinator, school nurse, in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity.
 - 2021 examples: with program reconstruction we have added full time PE and OT into the schedule such as, increased physical education classes, sensory integration-based movement activities, gardening/horticulture, cooking, and basic construction as part of electives, PE and vocational classes that support increased health and wellness awareness as well as increased educational participation.



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- Students in all grades will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- New Directions School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program (including after-school snacks), Summer Food Service Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program (including suppers).
- New Directions School 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. The vocational, PE and occupational therapy course content helps to target these areas at New Directions.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Trauma Informed Care Committee

The school will participate in a trauma informed care committee to help implement, monitor, review, and as necessary, revise the school's ability to provide trauma informed services, which includes but is not limited to an emphasis on nutrition and physical activity as part of the curriculum. The TIC committees consists of the school leadership and staff with periodic participation from administration and nursing.

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

School Meals

Meals served through the National 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 low-fat (1%) and fat free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

New Directions will periodically engage students and parents/guardians, through taste-tests of entrees, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify and share new, healthful,



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and appealing food choices. In addition, the school will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information will be made available when parents/guardians, students or staff inquire about menus, through nutritional information obtained via websites, on cafeteria menu boards, through activities related to horticulture and cooking, placards, or other printed materials.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

New Directions discourages students from sharing foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets. The pandemic also led to the increased emphasis on not sharing foods, snacks, or drinks.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day 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. New Directions School assesses when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, allergy considerations, children's ages, and other considerations. New Directions does not offer after-school or enrichment programs, therefore, snacks are only offered during school hours.

Rewards

New Directions does not use 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

New Directions School 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. The pandemic also requires particular expectations for serving foods and beverages when there is concern for transmission of COVID.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances).

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutritional standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.

II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion



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New Directions School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. New Directions School provides nutrition education 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 sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, (e.g., the vocational & OT horticulture program, farm visits, cooking, and taste testing)
- promotes fruits, vegetables, herbs, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- educates about the caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs and nutrition-related community services;
- includes nursing involvement when necessary for education and coaching;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e. at least 10 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity that include but also go beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- PE classes are offered on a regular basis;
- OT will offer a weekly sensory integration-based movement class;
- classroom health education will complement physical education by fostering 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 varied subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short movement breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate. OT is available to consult with teachers to support their ability to offer movement breaks.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

All students at New Directions will receive physical education opportunities throughout the school year. All physical education will be taught by a physical education teacher whenever possible. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity is also important to the PE needs of students and not solely those activities engaged in during PE class (e.g., sports, OT's sensory integration-based options, gardening activities, etc.).



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IV. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring

The Director of Education and/or designee will ensure compliance with the agency's nutrition and physical activity wellness policy. The Director of Education or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the CEO or designee.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Director of Education. In addition, the New Directions School will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the school has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the school will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The Director of Education will develop a summary report every three years on compliance with the school's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on data collected during that time. This report will be provided to the agency's CEO, school staff, organizations, school health services personnel and students and parents as appropriate (e.g., reports on participation during summer OT and voc program classes, grades for PE).

Policy Review

Given the impact of the pandemic, New Directions will restart policy review efforts related to this policy. An assessment of the status of the school and its accordance with the policy will be assessed annually (at minimum) to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement.