

WELLNESS POLICY

Adopted by the Wilkinson County Board of Education on August 13, 2019.
See also: Wellness Policy Addendum, adopted September 15, 2021.

PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

The Wilkinson County Board of Education is fully committed to providing a healthy and active school environment.

Making sure that Wilkinson County is maintaining a healthy school environment goes way beyond just the meals being served on a day-to-day basis. Living a healthy lifestyle is more than just eating healthy; it also requires the right amount of physical activity.

WELLNESS GOALS

In order to accomplish these goals:

- Child Nutrition Programs comply with federal, state, and local requirements. Child Nutrition Programs are accessible to all children.
- The school system will keep the public updated on all aspects of the wellness policy and the schools' progression on meeting and maintaining the goals set within the wellness policy.
- Wilkinson County School System will involve representation from students, faculty, health and physical education teachers, parents, and community leaders in the wellness committee.
- All foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and meet all federal and state guidelines.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines. The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals. Food and/or physical activity is not used as a reward or punishment.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts, and social studies.
- The staff responsible for nutrition education will be adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities will provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program-specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.

- Nutrition education information will be reviewed by a qualified, credentialed nutrition professional (e.g., Local Certified School Nutrition Director, School Food and Nutrition Specialist, or a Registered Dietitian).
- The school cafeteria serves as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community.
- School district(s) will provide information to families that encourages them to teach their children about health and nutrition and to provide nutritious meals for their families.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day. Movement can be made a part of science, math, social studies, and language arts.
- Physical education courses will be the environment where students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.
- Policies ensure that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes.
- Policies ensure that physical education classes meet state guidelines.
- Time allotted for physical activity will be consistent with research and with national and state standards.
- Provide a daily recess period, which is not used as a punishment or a reward. Consider planning recess before lunch, since research indicates that physical activity prior to lunch can increase nutrient intake and reduce food waste.
- Physical activity participation will take into consideration the “balancing equation” of food intake and physical activity.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports to encourage life-long physical activity.
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be safe.
- The school provides a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student's lives.
- Schools are encouraged to provide community access to, and encourage students and community members to use, the school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day.
- Schools encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity, such as a walk-to-school program.

OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

- After-school programs will encourage physical activity and healthy habit formation.
- Local wellness policy goals are considered in planning all school-based activities (such as school events, field trips, dances, and assemblies).
- Support for the health of all students is demonstrated by hosting health clinics and health screenings, and by helping to enroll eligible children in Medicaid and other state children's health insurance programs.
- Schools organize local wellness committees comprised of families, teachers, administrators, and students to plan, implement, and improve nutrition and physical activity in the school environment.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS ON CAMPUS

All foods made available on campus will comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines apply to all of the following:

Vending Machines	À La Carte	Beverage Contracts
Fundraisers	Concession Stands	Student Stores
School Parties and Celebrations		

- Food providers will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meets federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. Food providers will offer a variety of age-appropriate healthy food and beverage selections for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
- Nutrition information for products offered in snack bars, à la carte, vending, and school stores is readily available near the point of purchase.
- Promotional activities will be limited to programs that are requested by school officials to support teaching and learning. All promotional activities in schools will be connected to activities that encourage physical activity, academic achievement, or positive youth development, and are in compliance with local guidelines.
- Food providers will be sensitive to the school environment in displaying their logos and trademarks on school grounds.
- Classroom snacks feature healthy choices.
- Nutrition education is incorporated during classroom snack times, not just during meals. Foods and beverages sold at fundraisers include healthy choices and provide age-appropriate selections for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.
- Advertising messages are consistent with and reinforce the objectives of the education and nutrition environment goals of the school.

- Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during meal times must be consistent with established nutrition environment standards.

EATING ENVIRONMENT

- The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat lunch: at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch, from the time the student is seated.
- Lunch periods are scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible. Recess for elementary grades is scheduled before lunch.
- Cafeterias include enough serving areas so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.
- Dining areas are attractive and have enough space for seating all students.
- Drinking water is available for students at meals.
- Food is not used as a reward or a punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

CHILD NUTRITION OPERATIONS

- The child nutrition programs will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. If subsidy of the child nutrition fund is needed, it will not be from the sale of foods that have minimal nutritional value and/or compete nutritionally with program meals.
- The child nutrition program will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well.
- The school will strive to increase participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs (e.g., school lunch, school breakfast, after-school snack, and summer food service programs).
- Employ a food service director who is properly qualified, certified, and/or credentialed according to current professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training in food service operations.
- A child's need for nutrients does not end when school does. Therefore, recommend offering meals during breaks in the school calendar and coordinating with other agencies and community groups to operate, or assist with operating, a summer food service program for children and adolescents who are eligible for federal program support.
- Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.

FOOD SAFETY AND FOOD SECURITY

- All foods made available on campus comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to food service operations is limited to Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel. For further guidance, see the U.S. Department of Agriculture food security guidelines.

Guidelines for Healthy Snacks in Vending Machines

Beverages and food sold through school vending machines are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which include the following:

STANDARD	THRESHOLD
Total Calories from Fat	No More Than 30%
Calories from Saturated Fat	No More Than 10% of those Calories
Total Weight from Sugar	No More Than 20%

FARM TO SCHOOL

Farm to School programs ensure that students have more locally grown foods in their school meal and snack programs. Farm to School establishes connections between schools and local farms to purchase more local produce, improve student nutrition, and promote eating fruits and vegetables. Farm to School programs support local and regional farmers and the local economy by working with local distributors and farmers to purchase locally grown foods.

There are many benefits to starting and expanding Farm to School programs in schools. Farm to School efforts can increase student participation in the school meal programs and increase consumption of fruits and vegetables by an average of one serving per day, which can help prevent childhood obesity and improve nutrition. Food purchased through Farm to School can be successful within limited nutrition services food budgets once planning and menu choices are consistent with the seasonal availability of fresh and minimally processed local produce. Many schools offer salad bars in their school lunch programs to increase student choices of fruits and vegetables and to reflect their student population's ethnic and cultural diversity. Farm to School programs can promote lifelong healthy eating habits and improve student knowledge of and attitudes toward food, nutrition, and agriculture.

Having school gardens can contribute to a strong Farm to School program by providing opportunities for students to get involved in learning how to grow foods. Farm to School increases knowledge and skills relating to nutrition, physical activity, growing food, and understanding food supply systems. Additional food-related curriculum can include experiential learning opportunities, such as farm tours, visits to farmers markets, presentations

by farmers and chefs in the classroom, culinary education, and educational sessions for parents and community members.

As part of our Farm to School initiative, Wilkinson County Schools will:

- Plan menus through Nutrition Services to accommodate the seasonality of local agriculture, according to the availability of produce from local farms and school gardens.
- Ensure that at least 20% of produce purchased and served is locally grown fresh produce.
- Increase the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and opportunities for offering seasonal fresh produce as part of Nutrition Services.
- Allow teachers to establish a school garden, including container gardens, as part of curriculum to provide students the opportunity to plant, harvest, prepare, and eat the foods grown.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate the school garden as part of curriculum to enrich students' learning opportunities by presenting academic projects around food, nutrition, mathematics, science, language arts, and the environment.
- Use the Farm to School program to promote awareness of how food choices affect our health, communities, and environment.

BOARD ADOPTION AND SIGNATURE

This Wellness Policy was adopted by the Wilkinson County Board of Education on August 13, 2019.