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## Policy 649: Local Wellness Policy

**Adopted 08/25/06**  
**Amended 06/08/13**  
**Draft June 2022**

### Context:

Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) is committed to promoting health and wellness for students and staff. The district incorporates health and wellness efforts into our strategic priorities in order to promote the optimal health and academic success of all students. It is a priority for SPS to create environments where everyone's success matters and to support the [whole child](#) including their physical, intellectual, emotional/mental, and social well being. Children need access to nutritious foods, wellness-related educational content (Health Education and Physical Education curriculum), and opportunities for physical activity throughout the day. In addition, children need access to services and curriculum that support their mental health and social/emotional development.

Proper nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes and foster lifelong health habits leading to longer healthier lives. Federal Law ([PL 108.265 Section 204](#)), the [Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act 2010](#), and the [USDA final rule of 2016](#) require each local education agency (LEA) participating in the [National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Program](#) to develop a local wellness policy and establish a plan for measuring the implementation of the policy. The SPS Local Wellness policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the district; specific goals and measurable outcomes are identified within each section of the policy.

The SPS [School Wellness Advisory Committee](#) (SWAC) provides oversight of the Local Wellness policy and is one means for assessing and promoting a healthy environment for SPS. SWAC is composed of SPS administrators, staff members, students and parents, members of the larger Shrewsbury community and local public health representatives. The committee meets 4-5 times each school year to discuss topics related to the health and wellbeing of students and staff in our schools. This policy will be reviewed for relevance by the SWAC at a minimum of once every three years and updates will be made as needed. Before being finalized, the updated policy draft will be presented to the School Committee and the community with an opportunity for public comment before final approval. Approved policies are posted publicly on the district website. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee is charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the local wellness policy requirements.

Topics addressed in the policy include:

Section 1: Nutrition Education

Section 2: Nutrition Services

- Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals
- Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

- Marketing

Section 3: Physical Education and Physical Activity

Section 4: Wellness Promotion

- Social-Emotional Culture
- Counseling, Psychological Services
- School Health Services
- Physical Environment
- Employee Wellness
- Family Engagement
- Community Involvement

Section 5: Policy Development, Implementation and Evaluation



= indicates required federal standard

## 1. Nutrition Education



Nutrition education is a vital part of a K-12 comprehensive Health education program that empowers children with knowledge and skills to make healthy food and beverage choices. The district will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating and physical activity among students and staff. (Alliance for a Healthier Generation, 2020).

- Nutrition education will be taught at the middle and high school levels as a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect health. ([MGL Chapter 71, Section 1](#))
- Nutrition education will be taught using evidence-based curricula that are aligned with the [National Health Education Standards](#).
- Nutrition education will be developmentally appropriate, skill-based, behavior focused, participatory, culturally relevant and consistent with the [CDC's Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum](#).
- Nutrition and physical activity education will be included as part of health education classes and elective subjects and integrated into classroom subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies and art as feasible.
- Health educators will make efforts to collaborate with the food service staff, classroom teachers and other school staff to provide nutrition education throughout the school campus.
- Nutrition education will incorporate information from the [National dietary guidelines](#).

## 2. Nutrition Services

Children access up to two meals a day at school. Meals that meet nutrition standards established by the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program aim to mitigate hunger and obesity and model healthy eating. Therefore, it is essential that food and beverages offered at school are nutritious, help to shape future eating habits, and support growth, development and academic performance.

### A. Nutrition Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals

- All schools in the district will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) the School Breakfast Program (SBP).
-  The NSLP and SBP operate in accordance with [USDA nutrition standards for reimbursable meals](#).

- Meals will meet the nutrition standards by providing access to food that is appealing to children and includes fruits and vegetables, grains, meats and meat alternatives, fat-free and low fat milk.
- Sustainable food practices and environmentally friendly practices including the use of locally grown and seasonal foods, school gardens, and recycling are implemented when and where possible.
- Nutritional meal data will be made available upon request to the Food Service Director
-  Free, safe, non-flavored drinking water will be available to all students at mealtimes and throughout the school day.
- Students will be permitted and encouraged to carry reusable water bottles (filled with water only) to promote healthy hydration during the school day.
- Adequate time to eat school meals will be provided. Whenever possible, students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch.
- Information regarding the process for determining eligibility for free or reduced price meals will be provided to families upon school registration, at the start of each school year, and periodically throughout the year through Principal and Food Service communications. Information will also be available at all times on the [district website](#).
-  The district will protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals by utilizing a point of sale system that does not identify means of payment.
- Per the [district meal charge policy](#), all students will be served a nutritious meal, regardless of ability to pay or balance owed. Families will be contacted as needed and students will not be stigmatized if unable to pay for their meal.
- Students with documented dietary restrictions will be accommodated whenever possible while keeping within the required nutrition standards. Families should contact the food service manager in their child's building to provide specific information regarding the student's needs. Such requests will be kept confidential to the extent possible and will be treated with cultural sensitivity and respect.
-  Food service staff will be provided annual training that is in compliance with the [USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals](#).

## **B. Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages**

-  All foods and beverages sold or served to students during the school day will be compliant with [USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards](#) and/or the [MA 105 CMR 225.00 Nutrition Standards For Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools](#), whichever is stricter. These standards establish nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages sold or provided in public schools.
- Competitive foods or beverages refers to all foods or beverages sold or provided in a la carte lines in school cafeterias, school stores, school snack bars and/or vending machines.
-  All fundraising activities or school store sales involving food that occur during the school day (from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of school on a given day) must meet the state and federal nutrition standards.
- Snacks may be brought from home for children's own consumption. Families are asked to be respectful of possible food allergies when choosing snacks for school as all SPS buildings are designated as [Allergy Aware](#). Families are encouraged to send healthy snacks that will provide the "fuel" for effective learning.
- Sharing of snacks amongst students is not permitted.
- Staff, parents/caretakers, and/or volunteers may not bring in snacks of any kind to be shared with students.

-  Any foods or beverages served or sold at school to students outside of the school meals program should adhere to the above mentioned state and federal nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages.
- It is encouraged that any foods served (not sold) to students free of charge adhere to the above state and federal nutrition standards. This includes curriculum-based food activities, classroom celebrations, and/or other events held during the school day. Purchasing food through the SPS Food Service Department will ensure that regulations are followed.
- A building administrator and school nurse must be involved in the planning process for all food-related events. After receiving approval, the staff member responsible for the event must notify parents of the event and allow for opt-out and/or an alternative food choice that is consistent with student needs (allergies, dietary restrictions, etc) and no penalty for non-participation.
- Food should not be used as a reward at school unless specified for a specific student's Individual Education Program (IEP), 504, or behavior plan. The district recommends utilizing rewards that promote physical activity (e.g., extra movement breaks or recess) or educational messages (e.g., books, bookmarks, pencils, or read aloud time, etc).
- Withholding food as a punishment is not permitted.
- When a food reward is specified in an IEP, 504 or behavior plan, foods of high nutritional value should be used whenever possible.
- Students that require feeding and/or support due to medical needs are required to have a physician's note documenting the medical condition and the specific manner in which they will receive the food. Food services will not be required to make a determination regarding the nutritional standards in these situations.
- Any after school activities, evening or weekend events that serve or sell food and beverages should consider [USDA Smart Snacks](#) and [Massachusetts nutrition standards](#) when planning food options.

### C. Marketing

-  Any corporate sponsor or corporate partnerships that involve the marketing of food and beverages shall be aligned with [School Committee Policy on Sponsorship and Advertising](#), shall only market and promote those foods and beverages that meet or exceed the state and federal guidelines, and shall not compromise the Shrewsbury Local Wellness Policy.
- Marketing materials on any school property, structures, equipment (including sports equipment), or educational materials must follow the above guidelines.

### 3. Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical Education (PE), as the basis of a [Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program](#) (CSPAP), is intended to develop physical literacy skills that prepare individuals to be healthy and active for a lifetime. PE teachers will provide instruction and ongoing assessment of knowledge, motor and social skills while in a safe and supportive environment. Students will practice the knowledge and skills they have learned through physical activity (PA) opportunities in PE classes.

#### A. Physical Education (PE)

- PE shall be taught as a required subject in grades K-12 for all students. ([MGL Chapter 71, Section 3](#))
- PE classes should follow age appropriate, sequential curricula, provide maximum activity (at least 50% of class time in moderate to vigorous physical activity) to promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits.
- The PE program will align with the Massachusetts Health Curriculum Framework and the

- National Standards for Physical Education ([SHAPE America](#)).
- Student physical fitness will be evaluated through individualized fitness and activity assessments. Criterion based reporting is used for each student, including students with disabilities (e.g. FitnessGram, Brockport Physical Fitness Test).
- All PE classes will be taught by teachers who meet the requirements of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- All PE teachers in the district will receive content specific professional development in PE at least once per year.
- PE teachers are to be provided with training and specialized equipment to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in general PE classes. PE teachers will provide appropriate accommodations to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, are provided with an equal opportunity to participate in physical activity.
- Adapted Physical Education (APE) will be included as part of an Individual Education Program (IEP) for students with disabilities or other special needs who are evaluated as part of the IEP process and determined to have needs that limit or preclude such students' participation in general PE instruction or activities.
- Waivers, exemptions or substitutions for PE requirements will not be permitted. Though important for increasing physical activity, other physical activity experiences such as recess, intramural/interscholastic sports or recreational endeavors should not be used as a replacement for PE.
- Students will only be excused from PE when a note from a medical professional is provided.

#### **B. Physical Activity**

- Opportunities for family and community engagement in physical activity opportunities at all schools should be provided annually.
- PA programs (e.g. clubs, extended day programs, co-curricular activities, interscholastic sports) will be available before or after school for all levels.
- Outdoor recess at the elementary and middle levels will be provided as an academic break to promote PA. Principals will consider weather conditions including temperature and wind chill when determining whether to hold outdoor recess or other activities.
- PA breaks will be encouraged throughout the academic day to promote academic achievement at all levels.
- PA will not be used or withheld as a punishment.

### **4. Wellness Promotion**

SPS is committed to teaching students to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity and to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy behaviors. A coordinated school health approach guides district decision-making related to all aspects of student and staff physical and mental health and wellness.

#### **A. Social-Emotional Climate**

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which individuals develop self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. The district will expand social and emotional learning Tier 1 programs and other evidence-based approaches that promote healthy development. Social-emotional skills will be explicitly taught, modeled and reinforced across all grade levels. Examples of social, emotional, and behavioral learning approaches, tools, and/or programs include: Universal Design for Learning, Purposeful People, Character Strong, Mindfulness Practices.

- A sense of belonging at school is a building block for academic success in that it encourages students to be more engaged. Staff will receive professional development in the areas of Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity (DBIE) in order to better support all students and foster an environment where everyone's success matters.
- Anti-bullying policies will be included in student and staff handbooks, and concerns will be investigated promptly by administrators when reported.
- The district will use survey tools to assess student and family perceptions of belonging and connection at school, and district leaders will review the results.

#### **B. Counseling, Psychological and Social Services**

- Mental and behavioral health professionals and programs support students through an interconnected [Multi-Tiered System of Supports \(MTSS\)](#). Tiered supports will include coordination mechanisms to get students the right care at the right time.
- A process for identifying students in need of support for social, emotional and/or behavioral needs will be in place in each building. Early Intervening Teams or Student Support Teams are interdisciplinary groups of school professionals (counselors, nurses, administrators, teachers) that meet regularly to review individual student needs and determine possible supports based on the available.
- All staff are responsible for creating a sense of belonging and connectedness with our students. However, some students may require additional supports and services to maintain their mental health. All students will have access to mental health supports (e.g., adjustment counselors, school psychologists, behavior analysts, school nurses, and BRYT program staff at the high school and middle school levels ) in the school setting, with assistance for referrals to community resources as needed.
- [Signs of Suicide](#) (SOS) program will be incorporated into health education in grades 7 - 11.
- Staff will be provided with mental health-related professional development opportunities in order to be better prepared to identify and support student needs.

#### **C. School Health Services**

- School nurses in each building will provide care for all students including providing first aid, emergency care and assessment, the management of chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, seizures, food allergies, etc), support for mental health concerns, preventive services, and communication with the school team, families and community providers.
- Massachusetts-mandated screenings including vision, hearing, height, weight, postural and SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) will be conducted per the required schedules for each screening. School nurses collaborate with PE teachers and school counselors to complete screenings.
- School nurses will be provided professional development that is pertinent to their practice in order to support student needs.

#### **D. Physical Environment**

- School buildings will be maintained with regular cleaning and maintenance practices that ensure compliance with safety standards.
- All use of tobacco, vapor products, alcohol, marijuana, and illegal substances is prohibited in district buildings and on school campuses.
- All buildings will utilize an electronic entry system that allows doors to remain locked during the school day thereby monitoring visitor access to buildings.
- The district Safety and Security committee will meet regularly to review current security measures and identify areas for improvement.
- School Resource Officers will collaborate with building administrators and will receive training as needed to stay current in safety procedures.

#### **E. Employee Wellness**

- Staff wellness is considered essential and all staff are encouraged to practice and model healthy eating and physical activity habits.
- Staff wellness is supported by professional development opportunities and trainings regarding wellness, well-being, safety policies and procedures, etc that are made available to staff by the district.
- Free, confidential counseling, resources and support are available to all staff through the [employee assistance program](#).

#### **F. Family Engagement**

- The district recognizes that a strong relationship between families/caregivers and school staff reinforces student health and academic development. Families are encouraged to be actively involved and engaged in their child's learning.
- Family representatives will be included in the SWAC as their input and feedback is essential to the committee's work.
- School staff will invite family members to volunteer in various capacities for classroom and building level activities and committees.
- Families will be kept informed of district wellness activities and other health-related information via email. Information regarding community-wide events will be shared with families through the Community Bulletin which is sent via email to all families in the district.
- The district will make every effort to provide information to families in their primary language.

#### **G. Community Involvement**

- Representatives from community organizations (e.g., School Resource Officers, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Alliance, etc) will be included in the SWAC as their input and feedback is valued and appreciated.
- The Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-Being will work to develop relationships with community partners who could provide student learning and/or volunteer opportunities, as those efforts relate to the well-being of students.

### **5. Policy Development, Implementation and Evaluation**

-  The Superintendent of Schools and his/her designee are charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the local wellness policy requirements.
- Building Principals, in consultation with school nurses, are responsible for monitoring and managing the local wellness policy in their building.
- The Regional Youth Health Survey (RYHS) will be administered to all students in grades 7 - 12 on at least a bi-annual basis. Data derived from the survey will inform Local Wellness Policy updates as well as district wellness goals and activities.
- The Shrewsbury Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC) will compile data from the RYHS and report the findings and resulting goals to the School Committee at least bi-annually.
-  The current Wellness Policy will be posted on the [district website](#)
- Wellness Policy content will be included in new staff orientation and in mandatory annual staff training modules.
- SWAC is composed of a large group of district employees and community stakeholders. The following lists the membership categories for the 2021-2022 committee responsible for review and revision of the local wellness policy: Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Assessment, Assistant Superintendent for Community Partnerships and Well-being, Shrewsbury School Committee Representative, Spring St. School Principal, Oak Middle School Principal, Shrewsbury High School Assistant Principal, Director of Health/Physical Education/FamilyConsumerScience, Director of School Nursing, Director of Food Services, Director of School Counseling, Health

Teachers, Physical Education Teachers, Adjustment Counselor, School Nurses, School Physician, School Resource Officers, Shrewsbury Public Schools Parents/Caregivers, Shrewsbury High School Students, Representative from Shrewsbury Youth & Family Services, Representatives from Central Massachusetts Regional Public Health Collaborative

-  The Shrewsbury Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC) is responsible to review and update the Wellness Policy at a minimum of every three (3) years. The assessment results and policy draft will be made available to the public for review and comment before being finalized by a vote of the School Committee.

This policy will be reviewed within five years of the policy's effective date.

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