

WHITE RIVER VALLEY SUPERVISORY UNION

WELLNESS POLICY

Values statement: The White River Valley Supervisory Union recognizes that good health and wellness play a critical role in students' ability to learn and grow. Children develop life-long health behaviors at a young age and schools have a unique opportunity to build students' knowledge and skills to support a lifetime of wellness. By providing nutritious food, physical activity, health education, and both mental and physical health services, schools improve students' health and readiness to learn; thus, the school wellness program lays the foundation for student success. For this foundation to remain solid throughout children's lives, community and family support of school wellness programs are critical.

Policy statement: It is the policy of the White River Valley Supervisory Union to establish guidelines to promote student wellness and healthy behaviors throughout each school district. This policy ensures compliance with the federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. The policy has been developed in consultation with food service programs, health and physical education teachers, nurses and guidance counselors, administrators, employee wellness liaisons, facilities staff, parents, and community members who represent the 10 domains of the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC)¹ wellness model. The WSCC model has been utilized to promote a comprehensive, collaborative approach to health and learning in each school.

Definitions:

HEALTH – a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity².

WELLNESS - the active process of pursuing information and behaviors that lead to a healthy life.

A. Health and Nutrition Education

1. The school district shall provide health education programs in grades k-12 as required by state law and regulations of the State Board of Education. Health education shall include, but not be limited to, information about nutrition, first aid, CPR, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, safety, benefits of exercise, bullying, violence, and harassment prevention, human development, sex education, disease and injury prevention³, and social and emotional education. Students will learn about the importance of good health for both short and long term well-being and will develop health-related skills such as accessing valid information, analyzing influences, assessing risks, setting goals, advocating for ones' self, and communicating clearly⁴.
2. Nutrition and other health education programs shall be conducted by appropriately trained staff members, including Farm to School volunteers, where applicable.
3. To the extent practicable, nutrition and other health education shall be integrated into core curricular areas and students shall be exposed to health information that is consistent across disciplines and throughout the school.

4. The food service program shall serve as a key partner in nutrition education by working closely with teachers and leading activities that may include taste tests, recipes using food from school gardens, and monthly nutrition themes.

5. Staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to model healthy habits.

B. Physical Education and Activity

1. The district shall provide physical education classes led by a licensed physical educator for all students as required by Vermont's Education Quality Standards⁵.

2. In accordance with Vermont's Education Quality Standards, each school shall offer options for students in grades k-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. The district shall provide physical activity opportunities for students through recess periods in appropriate grades or through other activities before or after school including interscholastic athletics, physical activity clubs, or intramural sports.

3. Recess shall not be withheld from a student as a consequence for missed work or poor behavior, except in cases where a student's presence at recess is deemed unsafe or detrimental to the child's well-being or the well-being of others.⁶

4. The district will work to minimize interruptions to physical education classes. This includes holding to a minimum the number of non-physical education activities in physical education facilities during regular class times.

5. The after school program will provide and encourage daily periods of physical activity for all participants.⁷

C. Health Services

1. The school district shall provide a cohesive, integrated approach to the delivery of services to appraise, protect, and promote health.

2. School health services and programs will be based on identified student needs and include assessment, planning, and implementation. All school health practices will be evidence-based as outlined in the School Nurse Standards of Practice Manual, the National Association of School Nurses Scope and Standards of Practice, and the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents.

3. School nurses shall be included in the development of student IHP, IEP and 504 plans as appropriate. Nurses will coordinate closely with food service directors, SAP counselors, and staff throughout the school to ensure student safety and wellness.

4. Other health resources may include: dental hygienists, medical consultations, and additional resources as needed.

D. Nutrition Services

Related to the Foodservice Program

1. No foods of minimal nutritional value, as defined by the USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools requirements, shall be sold to students from midnight until thirty minutes after the completion of the school day.
2. The sale of foods during meal periods in food service areas shall be allowed only if all income from the sale, including the sale of approved foods and drinks from vending machines, accrues to the benefit of the school, the school food service program, or the student organization sponsoring the sale.
3. Districts shall ensure that foods offered at school other than through the National School Lunch and Breakfast program, including foods sold through vending machines, shall comply with Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2015 and the Smart Snacks in Schools (note: see references for exclusions).⁸
4. The school district shall ensure that guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to sections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act and section 9(f)(1) and 17a of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.⁹
5. The district will provide nutritious snacks to all school-sponsored afterschool programs through the National School Lunch Program. Schools will provide suppers through the Child and Adult Care Food Program when appropriate due to the length of the afterschool program.
6. The school district shall provide a clean and safe meal environment for students as well as adequate space for serving and eating school meals.
7. The district shall provide professional development opportunities based on USDA guidelines for food service and other staff members in areas of nutrition and wellness.
8. The school district will provide potable drinking water in all cafeterias, including a back up source of water in the event of a loss of electricity.

Not Specifically Related to the Foodservice Program

1. The district will encourage the use of non-food rewards and incentives for students, such as earning extra recess, a sports tournament, or a movie. When food is used as an occasional reward, educators are encouraged to include healthy food options. Food or beverages shall not be withheld from students as a punishment.
2. The district will encourage the consumption of water and the sale of healthful snacks at outside school events.
3. The district shall establish meal periods that are scheduled at appropriate hours and provide at least 20 minutes to eat, excluding the time to walk to the cafeteria and stand in line, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. To the extent practicable, recess should occur prior to the lunch service.
4. The district shall comply with Vermont Act 148: Universal Recycling and Composting Law.

E. Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services

1. The school district recognizes that students' readiness to learn is frequently impacted by emotional, social, and familial factors. A wide variety of district professionals and outside agencies shall be utilized to support the emotional, social and mental health of students, with the breadth of services determined by student needs. Parents may aid in accessing or financing some services.

G. Health Promotion for Staff

1. The school district recognizes that fostering a personal commitment to positive health behaviors in staff contributes to improved health status, higher morale, and greater personal commitment to the school's coordinated school health program and creates positive role modeling.

2. The school district shall promote opportunities for faculty and staff to improve their health status through activities such as health assessments, health education, and health-related fitness activities when possible.

3. The school district shall encourage participation in an employee wellness program that includes components of planning, implementing, and evaluating.

H. Family/Community Involvement

1. Curriculum will afford opportunities for connections with agencies and businesses aligned with the wellness policy, including community-based learning experiences that promote health and wellness.

2. Information about the policy and school wellness activities will be provided to parents in the form of handouts, the school website, or articles and information in school newsletters.

3. Students will be asked for input and feedback on school wellness programs through the use of student surveys and attention will be given to their comments.

I. Implementation

1. The superintendent or his or her designee shall monitor district programs and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative procedures established to carry out the requirements of this policy.

2. The superintendent or his or her designee shall report at least annually to the board on the district's compliance with law and policies related to student wellness. The report shall include an assurance that district guidelines for reimbursable meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidelines issued for schools in accordance with federal law.

3. The White River Valley Supervisory Union Wellness Team will meet no fewer than four times annually to monitor implementation of this policy and will review the policy each year.

4. Data such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the School Nurse Report, and the School Health Index will be used to identify areas of strength and need and to prioritize specific implementation steps.

References

1. "Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model," available at www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsc
2. Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; sig (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100), available at www.who.int
3. Vermont Statute Title 16, Chapter 001, Subchapter 7 § 131
4. National Health Education Standards, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm>
5. Vermont Education Quality Standards, available at education.vermont.gov
6. American Academy of Pediatrics Council on School Health: "The Crucial Role of Recess in School." Available at pediatrics.aapublications.org
7. The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, NANA. www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org
8. "Smart Snacks in School Standards," available at www.fns.usda.gov
9. The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, available at www.fns.usda.gov/richard-b-russell-national-school-lunch-act

