



VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

30 Park Street • P.O. Box 600

Vernon, CT 06066-0600

Phone (860) 870-6000

Fax (860) 870-6008

Website: www.vernonpublicschools.org

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Introduction

The Vernon Board of Education recognizes that student health and success in school are interrelated. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of education if students are not healthy and fit, physically, mentally and socially. Therefore, the Board promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance potential and ensures that no child is left behind. It is the Board's policy to establish and maintain a District Wellness Committee with the purpose of promoting and advancing the implementation of this policy and evaluating its effectiveness.

I. District Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The District will convene a representative district wellness committee (DWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy. At the School level, the school wellness champion of each school shall be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of this wellness policy. The designated official for oversight of the DWC is Director of Athletics & Physical Education, Health, & Wellness. The designated official for oversight of implementation of the district wellness policy (DWP) is Director of Food & Nutrition.

The DWC membership includes, but is not limited to, the District Food Service Director, the Physical Education and Health Program administrator, a district administrative representative, a school board member, a building level administrator, a school nurse, a teacher, a staff representative from each school building, a local community partner preferably a representative from the town's Parks and Recreation Department, a parent, a student, and a health care professional. The members of this council serve at the discretion of the Board of Education.

The goals of this policy are to:

- Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors (nutrition education)
- Work collaboratively to support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' wellness, academic performance, and demonstrating a commitment to improving student nutrition (nutrition promotion)
- Provide opportunities for all students to engage in physical activity, develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, and understand the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle (physical activity)
- Provide opportunities to integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting so that all efforts are complementary (other wellness related school based activities)

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The Director of Food & Nutrition will be responsible for the oversight of the implementation of the DWP to ensure that the goals and guidelines of this policy are met at the school level. At the school level, the school wellness champion will use a building level checklist to assess implementation, create an action plan, and generate an annual progress report. The school wellness champion will report findings to the DWC for further discussion and review.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at www.vernonpublicschools.org.

Record Keeping

The District will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the DWP including documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public, documentation of efforts to review and update the DWP, and the most recent assessment on the implementation of the DWP.

Annual Notification of Policy

The District will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The District will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. The District will provide as much information as possible about the school wellness environment in the annual progress report.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy and assess the implementation of the policy while including:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the District's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District's wellness policy.

The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The District will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the District. The District will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Connecticut Nutrition Standards.

The District will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The District will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

The Board believes that every student should develop the knowledge that will promote lifelong habits for good health and the skills needed for healthy eating behaviors. Effective nutrition education and the types of food available to students greatly influence eating behaviors.

School Meals

All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that meet federal regulations for school meal nutrition standards set forth by the [Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010](#).

- In accordance with [federal law and applicable regulations](#), meal prices will be reviewed each year and established by the Superintendent and the Food Service Director, with the approval of the Board.
- Meal prices and menus will be conspicuously posted in each cafeteria or designated meal area and will be available on the [District website](#).
- Students will have adequate time to eat and enjoy their meals, from the time they sit down to eat.
- Any student may eat in the school cafeteria or other designated place and shall be provided a pleasant environment in which to eat.
- Students will have the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural, and ethnic favorites. School staff should consider the various cultural preferences in development of nutrition education programs and food options.
- School food service staff shall make necessary food substitutions or modifications for students based on [documented medical](#) or other needs.
- It is prohibited for students with unpaid balances to be shamed in any way, including by announcing their names, making them use a different serving line, or sending home clearly marked notices that they have an unpaid balance. Schools will reach out to the family of a child with an unpaid balance to assess whether the child is eligible for free or reduced price meals.
- Student privacy will be protected with regards to free or reduced price meals in the cafeteria. All students, regardless of the type of payment they make for school meals, are given a code to enter at the cash register. It is prohibited for school food service personnel to share a student's eligibility status with anyone outside of Food & Nutrition without prior approval from the Director of Food & Nutrition.
- Applications for free or reduced price meals will be distributed to all families at the start of the school year. The application is also available on the [District website](#).

Staff Qualifications & Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#).

Water

Students and staff will have access to free, safe, fresh drinking water throughout the school day without restriction. Water fountains are available in each school cafeteria. Bottled water may be made available for purchase by staff and students in the cafeteria.

Competitive Foods & Beverages

The District participates in the [Healthy Food Certification](#) through the State of Connecticut and follows the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) for all foods **sold** to students separately from reimbursable meals.

For purposes of this policy, School Hours are defined as the period from midnight before the beginning of the school day to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

- During the school day, food or beverages sold outside of the school meal program ("competitive" foods and beverages) shall meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards as set forth by the Healthy Food Certification. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, snack carts and fundraising. Food and beverages meeting these requirements will be listed on the State Department of Education's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) and can be found on the district website.
- Food and beverage items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards can only be sold at the location of an event that occurs after the school day or on the weekend, provided the sale is not from a vending machine or the school store.
- During the period of thirty (30) minutes before any meal program up until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the program, no competitive foods or beverages may be sold or served outside of the school meal program.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Connecticut Nutrition Standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. The District will make available to parents and teachers a list of [healthy fundraising ideas](#).

Celebrations & Rewards

School staff shall encourage non-food alternatives, such as additional physical activity, as student celebrations and rewards. Non-food alternatives will be available on the [District website](#) and should be promoted. However, should the staff feel compelled to use food items for a celebration or as a reward, foods and beverages served at school during school hours or as classroom snacks should meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#).

Neither food nor beverages are to be withheld from students as punishment.

Nutrition Promotion & Marketing in Schools

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students. Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the Connecticut Nutrition Standards such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

The District will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. Faculty and staff are encouraged to serve as role models for students by demonstrating that healthy eating and physical activity are an important part of daily life.

Nutrition Education

The Vernon School District has a comprehensive curriculum approach to nutrition in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. All Pre-K-12 instructional staff will be encouraged to integrate nutritional themes from the Connecticut Department of Education into daily lessons when appropriate.

IV. Physical Activity

The Board believes every student should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, maintain physical fitness, understand the short and long term benefits of physical activity, and value physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle. In addition, the staff is encouraged to participate in and model physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Physical Education

The Vernon Public School District's comprehensive, standards-based physical education (PE) curriculum identifies the progression of skill development in grades K-12. PE curriculum revisions will follow a formally established periodic review cycle congruent to other academic subjects. The District shall provide physical activity and PE opportunities aligned with the **Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework** that provides students with the knowledge and skills to lead a physically active lifestyle. The PE program shall provide adequate space and equipment as well as conform to all applicable safety standards.

PE classes and physical activity opportunities will be available for all students. All PE classes aim to provide moderate to vigorous activity for all students. School staff consider the various cultural preferences in development of PE programs.

- At the elementary level, PE classes will meet for a minimum of forty minutes per class period. Classes meet every three school days.
- At the middle school level, PE classes will meet two times per week for a minimum of 100 minutes per week.
- At the high school level, PE classes will meet a minimum of two times per week per semester for a minimum of 160 minutes per week.

As recommended by the **Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE)**, school leaders of physical activity and PE shall guide students through a process that will enable them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness through the following:

- Expose students to a wide variety of physical activities
- Teach physical skills to help maintain a lifetime of health and fitness
- Encourage self-monitoring so students can see how active they are and set their own goals
- Individualize the intensity of activities
- Focus feedback on development of fitness and athletic skills.
- Be active role models

PE classes shall be based on a curriculum aligned to state and national PE standards.

- The student-teacher ratio for physical education classes will comply with the Vernon Board of Education Class Size Policy.
- PE teachers will prepare confidential individual fitness assessments for students based on **Connecticut's Fitness Standards**. These assessments will be made available to parents upon request.
- There may be no substitution of PE classes for other physical activities, such as after school athletics, etc.
- Schools may not allow students to be exempt for required PE class time or credit.
- District will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

School staff members shall not order performance of physical activity as a form of discipline.

Access to school sites will be provided through permitting use of facilities to community youth sports groups consistent with the District's facilities use policy so additional opportunities are available for youth to participate in quality physical activity, fitness, sports and recreation programs.

Staff Qualifications & Professional Development

The PE staff will be provided with professional development opportunities on a yearly basis in the area of physical education. The school district will promote periodic and ongoing programs to increase nutritional knowledge and physical activity for all faculty and staff.

All PE staff must be certified/licensed to teach PE.

Recess (Elementary)

Recess provides opportunities for physical activity, which helps students stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. School authorities shall develop schedules that provide time for supervised recess in every elementary school.

Schools shall provide at least 20 minutes of active daily recess to all elementary school students.

Staff members shall not deny a student's participation in recess or other physical activity as a form of discipline, unless the safety of students is in question. Each student is entitled to some portion of recess.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

Classrooms are encouraged to incorporate short breaks that include physical movement. Resources and ideas are made available through the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Active Transport

The school district promotes programs such as walking and biking to school.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The District will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The District will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

Community Partnerships

The District will continue and enhance relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Family Involvement

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to promote their child's participation in the school meal programs and physical education programs. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to promote healthy eating behaviors and physical activity opportunities at home.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The DWC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.