

WELLNESS POLICY

The Bedford Public Schools are committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and the development of lifelong wellness practices. The schools strive to meet the goals as set forth by the Massachusetts School Nutrition Task Force:

- To provide children with access to adequate and healthy food while at school
- To promote healthy eating patterns through classroom nutrition education coordinated with the comprehensive health education program including education, health and food services
- To provide children with access to appropriate nutrition services
- To establish this school-wide policy, involving input from a wide variety of representatives from the school community.

The goals of the Bedford Public Schools are to provide students with opportunities to learn and practice a variety of physical activities within the school curriculum and encourage the pursuit of physical activities for enjoyment and lifelong wellness.

Goals for Nutrition Education

Through Health Education, the goals of Bedford Public Schools are to provide a basis for nutrition education, guided by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health curriculum framework, to be elaborated upon in Family and Consumer Sciences and with connections with overall wellness and physical activity.

Bedford Public Schools' aim is to help develop base knowledge about healthy food choices, and behavior around food. The Bedford Public Schools also emphasize the connection of physical activity, overall wellness, and healthy food choices.

- The schools have written Health Education curricula that guide educators in providing instruction in Nutrition for students.
- Nutrition Education is provided in the schools educational program grades K-12.
- Nutrition Education in Health education includes instruction on a food guidance system (e.g. MyPlate).
- Students learn to make healthy food choices for meals and snacks.
- Students learn to identify healthy food choices through nutrition labels.
- Students learn to identify healthy, high-energy foods to aid in participation in physical activity including extracurricular activities.
- Students learn the relationship between food choices, diet and disease.
- Students learn about the prevention of disease through proper food choices and nutrition.

Goals for Physical Activity

- The schools have written Physical Education curricula that guide physical educators in providing instruction and physical activity for students.
- All students grades K-12 receive physical education instruction each week for the full school year (amount will vary depending upon grade level).
- State licensed physical educators teach all physical education classes.
- Physical education includes instruction in fitness concepts as well as physical activity that promotes fitness.
- Physical activity/exercise is not used as punishment. Physical activity is not withheld as punishment for inappropriate behavior in other classes. This does not preclude Physical Educators from having a student sit out from activity for inappropriate behavior during the activity.
- Each school has a budget so as to provide equipment for students during physical activity.
- Students are given instruction in a variety of physical domains including recreational, competitive, and non-competitive activities to encourage lifelong participation in health enhancing activities.
- Students in grades K-5 are given opportunities for physical activity during daily recess.
- Students are taught fundamental pedestrian and bicycle education.

Goals for school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness

- The schools have adequate facilities to provide extracurricular activities for all students who are interested without overcrowding or safety risks.
- The schools provide after-school access to facilities for students to engage in physical activity outside of the school day when students are involved in appropriately supervised, school-sponsored events
- In collaboration with the Recreation Department, the elementary schools provide after school recreational programs for students.
- The middle school provides an intramural program for students after school.
- The high school provides an extensive extracurricular athletic program for students after school.

Goals for Social and Emotional Health and Well-Being

The Public Schools of Bedford is committed to promoting the social and emotional well-being of all students. Bedford's commitment to addressing student mental health has five objectives:

- Foster a school culture of overall acceptance and respect for differences. De-stigmatize mental health issues, whether referring to individuals with clinical diagnoses or those struggling with personal or family stresses or other social/emotional issues. Create an environment in which it is safe and acceptable to talk about differences and ask for help.

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- Provide age-appropriate social and emotional literacy and education. Teach effective strategies and practices to support mental health, resilience and well-being throughout all grades, including skills that promote healthy behaviors in relation to nutrition, exercise, interpersonal relationships, stress management, mindfulness, injury prevention and substance abuse.
- Raise awareness among students, parents, school staff, coaches and other members of the community about the signs and symptoms of mental health, social/emotional issues, and substance abuse, keeping in mind that many behavioral and academic struggles, are often manifestations of compromised mental health or personal or family and stresses. Provide training on how to reach out to students and help them access support and treatment services. Ensure that all school staff are trained on emergency procedures, including when to report concerns to administration and support staff.
- Ensure that in-school support services (including guidance and adjustment counselors, psychologists, and/or nursing staff) are accessible to all students presenting with social, emotional, mental health and substance abuse issues for screening, referral and ongoing counseling in school counseling as needed. Trained licensed clinical staff will be available to respond to social service and psychiatric emergencies during school hours.
- Promote well-being and balance by addressing the policies and practices around the intersection of academic expectations/achievement and student mental health.

Goals for Health Services

Bedford Public Schools Health Services provides school-based health services that support academic learning and success from registered nurses that improves and maintains the health and well-being of the Bedford school community. Comprehensive care is delivered recognizing that students' health have a direct impact on school performance and educational achievement.

The delivery of school based health services is provided by DESE and Massachusetts licensed registered nurses under the support and direction of the Bedford Public Schools, the school physician and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The coordination of health services will be provided to students during the school day and will include the prevention and detection of communicable diseases, health screenings, first aid, social and emotional health care, the care of chronic health conditions and short and long term illnesses, care coordination, health education and health record maintenance.

School nurses impact student learning in positive ways. In addition to providing care for illness and

injury, promoting wellness and serving as a student advocate in school-based-team collaboration, school nurses also help keep students in school by: shortening illness-related absences, lessening the number of Students sent home needlessly, identifying health-related barriers to learning, providing early detection and correction of health problems, helping teachers accommodate students with special needs and offering education and support to students, parents, and staff.

Goals for Active Transportation

The Bedford Public Schools will strive to accommodate all students, parents/guardians, and school staff by creating active transportation opportunities. It is the desire of the Bedford Public Schools to encourage principles that contribute to the safety, health, and quality of life of students by providing greater opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle trips, including the availability of bike racks, and via formal participation in the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program including but not limited to safety training and ongoing walking/biking event participation.

The Bedford Public Schools supports walking, bicycling, and other forms of active transportation to and from school and encourages efforts to minimize driving and idling when possible. The District will provide all students and teachers with pedestrian and bicycle safety education on active transportation skills and other program elements of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program.

The Bedford Public Schools will strive to support safe walking and biking to and from school and to decrease parent congestion and idling through the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School program elements of education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation.

Facilities and Resources:

- District will provide storage facilities for bicycles, non-motorized scooters, and other active transportation devices.
- Bike racks are available at all schools encouraging students to bike to school. School- wide physical activity initiatives are encouraged.
- Establish a Safe Routes to School Task Force that meets regularly to promote walking/biking to and from school and address community infrastructure issues.

- Publish arrival and dismissal plans on school websites and handbooks.

Nutrition Guidelines for foods available at schools during the school day

Bedford Public Schools will meet or exceed USDA guidelines and standards when ensuring nutritionally sound choices in all schools. School lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, but decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food authorities. The USDA regulations set forth nutrition standards for school lunch service.

Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards for competitive food and beverages are in effect from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. Vending machines comply with the standards at all times. Healthy foods and beverages are provided in vending machines, school stores and other venues within the schools' control. The Bedford Public Schools follow guidelines that promote the availability of foods and beverages that contribute toward eating patterns that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, as articulated by Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids. Massachusetts Competitive Food Guidelines can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/07/qg/school-nutrition-glance.pdf>

In addition to food provided through School Lunch Program, types of foods available during the school day may include

- *A-la-carte foods* that are sold typically in the cafeteria by the school food service department. They are separately and individually priced and are not usually part of the National School Lunch Program.
- *Competitive foods* are foods and/or beverages sold to students that compete with the schools' operation of the National School Lunch Program. Items include those sold in vending machines, student stores, and by parents, school staff, or outside companies or organizations.

Assurances

Bedford Public Schools assures that the guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and section 9(f) (1) and 17(a) of the Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(f) (1), 1766(a) 0, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

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Plan for measuring, implementing and monitoring policy

These guidelines will take effect July 1, 2020, and will be implemented with the start of school in September 2020. Principals, with assistance from the Director of Athletics & Wellness, and the Director

Of Food Services, will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the guidelines set forth in this policy.

Wellness Committee

This policy was developed by the Bedford Public Schools with the advice and support of the School Wellness Committee comprised of members from the Schools, Community, Board of Health and Youth and Family Services.