

GUILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a school wellness policy?

School wellness policies are required for all schools participating in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs - school breakfast, school lunch or the after-school snack program. Any school with one of these programs must have a school wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006 year. The Federal law, enacted in 2004, outlines key requirements, including nutrition guidelines for all foods served on campus, and nutrition education and physical activity goals.

Why do schools need school wellness policies?

A school's ultimate responsibility is helping each child learn. To do this, the health and development of the whole child needs to be addressed. One of the major health concerns in the U.S. today is the increase in childhood overweight problems. There are many causes for these problems, including decreased physical activity, large portion sizes and easy access to foods that provide a lot of calories compared to nutrients. Although American kids may be overweight and overfed generally, they are also frequently undernourished. School wellness policies focus on improving health and preventing childhood obesity by creating a school environment where healthful food choices predominate and physical activity is part of every day. There is a strong connection between health and academic performance, too. By doing the same things that optimize students' health, we can optimize students' performance in the classroom and in physical activities.

Will PTO's and other school organizations be able to conduct food related fundraisers?

Yes, provided they occur after the end of the school instructional day. Fundraisers occurring before or during the school instructional day will not be allowed on school campus. Events involving the sale of food including football games, etc., will be allowed provided they occur after school hours. However, we encourage organizations to think "healthier" in conducting their fundraisers. We guarantee that schools can make as much money selling healthful choices as they did selling candy bars and cookie dough. Why? There are hundreds of examples across the country. Many schools have gone to fundraisers like walk-a-thons that support physical activity.

Will PTO's and other organizations be able to provide luncheons to the staff?

Yes. Again, we would encourage the use of healthy foods as parents and staff set an example for our youth.

Will food-related events and activities be allowed during the school day?

Provided they are aligned with a specific curriculum or cultural related event, they will be allowed. These events will be determined by the Administration. Healthy food options are encouraged including food that would meet or exceed Connecticut's Health Snack Standards for Food and Beverages at School. Food will not be allowed to be distributed purely for a birthday or celebratory event outside of the specific curriculum or cultural related activity.

Will birthday celebrations for my child be allowed?

Yes as long as the celebrations do not involve food and as determined by the classroom teacher. Individual parental control over what your child eats is enhanced by this Regulation.

Can my child be denied recess?

No. Staff members cannot deny participation in recess as a form of punishment or discipline.

Is family and community involvement important in implementing this policy?

Yes. We have a unique opportunity in this Community to create a healthier environment for our children, but we need the support of all involved. In order to promote family and community involvement in the area of wellness, the building principal or designee is responsible for creating a participatory environment where nutrition education information is provided. Parents are encouraged to participate as well by sending in healthier snacks/meals to school and promoting their child's physical education. Get involved!!

