



WELLNESS POLICY ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION

In the words of our mission statement, Bridge Boston Charter School is devoted to “close partnerships with families and a focus on the whole child,” to removing “the health and social obstacles that hinder student learning,” and to helping our students “view themselves as creators of their own futures.” A wellness policy that focuses on specific ways that the School can help children achieve these goals is crucial to the meeting that mission.

The Bridge Boston Charter School Wellness Policy is adapted from the model policy created by the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) March 2005 (<http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/WellnessPolicies.html>).

PREAMBLE AND POLICY GOALS

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Bridge Boston Charter School (hereafter, the “School”) is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children’s health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the School that:

- The School will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- The School will provide students, at no cost to the families, with access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- The School will participate in available federal school meal programs, including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.
- The School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

ACHIEVING THE POLICY GOALS

I. REVIEW OF POLICIES

The Bridge Boston Charter School administration will work with the Bridge Boston Charter School Parent Council and with School health care professionals to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.

II. NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF FOODS AND BEVERAGES SERVED ON CAMPUS

School Meals: Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- include a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- include only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- include grains that are at least half whole grain.

Breakfast: To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- The School will operate the School Breakfast Program, at no cost to the families.
- The School will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- The School will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- The School will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Community Eligibility Program (CEP): The School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, the School will provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income.

Meal Times and Scheduling: The School will:

- provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times (*e.g.*, lunch will be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.);
- not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless eating is programmatically integral to such activities;
- provide students access to and encourage hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: The School will contract with a qualified food service provider to provide food services for the school.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages: The School will ensure that every child is adequately fed and will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.): No foods and Beverages will be sold individually at the School.

Snacks: Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Bridge Boston will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. Bridge Boston will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents. The School will pursue receiving reimbursements for after-school snacks through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards: The School will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as punishment.

III. NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTION AND FOOD MARKETING

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

The School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. We will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

INTEGRATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO THE CLASSROOM SETTING

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The School will offer healthy eating seminars for parents and send home nutrition information. In addition, the School will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The School will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

FOOD MARKETING IN SCHOOLS

The School will not participate in food marketing.

IV. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Daily Physical Education (P.E.): All students, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education twice per week (or its equivalent of 90 minutes/week) for the entire school year. Additionally, all students will have three daily periods of play time. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Sports: All 5th grade students participate in a sports program for approximately 5 hours/week. Students participate in 3 seasonal sports throughout the year including soccer, basketball, and track and field. Students work on the fundamentals of the game, while also learning about personal health and building teamwork skills, such as cooperation and communication.

Daily Recess: All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which the School will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

The School will discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, students will have periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School: The after-school program will provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and structured activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Physical Activity and Punishment: Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

V. MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

Monitoring: The Executive Director will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. Every three years, the Executive Director will ensure a summary report on compliance with the School's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies is developed by staff overseeing health and wellness programs. This report will be then shared with the Board of Trustees and the School's parent organization.

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with the Executive Director's report. The School will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.