

Covington County Board of Education Wellness Policy

The Covington County Board of Education is committed to the optimal physical, emotional, and academic development of every student. For students to achieve their potential and experience success, the district must create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments in all settings throughout the school year. The Covington County School District will align health and wellness efforts with other school improvement initiatives to ensure the overall health and success of all students.

Research shows that proper nutrition, in combination with physical activity, are intertwined with positive academic outcomes. Inadequate consumption of specific foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products are associated with lower levels of academic achievement among school-age children.

This local school wellness policy outlines the Covington County School district's approach to ensuring that the school environment provides opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools within the Covington County School district. Specific goals and outcomes are identified within each section of the district's local school wellness policy.

The Covington County Schools Child Nutrition Program Director, alongside the district Superintendent, have the authority and responsibility of ensuring that each school within the district complies with the wellness policy. The Covington County Schools Child Nutrition Program Director serves as the District Wellness Coordinator to ensure compliance of the local wellness policy with all federal, state, and local requirements regarding the Child Nutrition Program. This person also facilitates the convening of the District Wellness Committee meetings.

Each school within the Covington County School District has the responsibility of selecting a minimum of one delegate for ensuring the school's compliance with the district-wide wellness policy. Designated persons from each school meet annually to discuss achievement and what particular steps will be made during the school year to

meet the nutrition education and physical activity requirements of the district's wellness policy. Each school retains documentation locally to support and verify that all wellness policy guidelines and responsibilities are met and attained. This documentation is accessible to public, state, and local review.

A copy of the Covington County School Wellness Policy remains on the district website. Hard copies are also accessible at each school and the central office.

GOALS

The Covington County School District adopts the following goals for the local wellness policy:

1. The Child Nutrition Program within this district complies with all federal, state, and local requirements and guidelines. The Child Nutrition Program is accessible to all students and strives to provide nutritious, appealing foods that meet the health and nutritional needs of students.
2. All Covington County schools will promote and provide opportunities and support for students to be physically active on a regular basis throughout each school day. Each school is committed to developing children's knowledge and skills for physical activity to maintain students' commitment to an active, healthy lifestyle.
3. Covington County Schools provide nutrition education that is appropriate for students and reflects a wide variety of student cultures. Nutrition education is integrated into students' learning curriculum to teach and foster life-long healthy eating habits. This is done in accordance with each individual school's preference with documentation being kept locally for review purposes.
4. Covington County Schools dedicates a focus and commitment to providing a safe and comfortable school environment conducive to consumption of healthy foods. Each school campus allows ample time and space for eating meals. The school campuses must not establish policies, guidelines, schedules, or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict access to or compete with the meal schedule.

After being seated with a nutritious meal, students have a minimum of 15 to 20 minutes to consume their meal.

5. Each school's designated persons for wellness policy compliance ensure the local school's development and implementation of nutrition education and physical activities for all students. Designated persons for each school maintain records locally to reflect the nutritional and physical health activities completed throughout each academic school year. This documentation is accessible for local, state, and public review.
6. Each school within the district ensures that all foods sold in vending machines, school stores, and cafeterias are compliant with the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards.
7. Covington County Schools demonstrate a commitment to educate all students on other aspects of overall health and wellness throughout each school year. Some of the activities and instruction focused on other areas of health and wellness, include but are not limited to: mental health, germ awareness and sickness prevention procedures, dental hygiene education, and opportunities for routine screenings regarding vision and other elements of overall physical health. The district partners with Health Heroes annually to bring vaccine clinics to individual schools.

Wellness Policy Committee: Covington County Schools welcome participation from community members and stakeholders in the development, implementation, review, and update of the local wellness policy. The Wellness Policy Committee consists of a wide variety of members throughout the district and community. Meetings of the district's local Wellness Policy Committee post in advance on the school district's website to provide opportunities for attendance and participation in the wellness policy process. The purpose of the District Wellness Committee (DWC) is to establish goals and oversight of school health and safety policies and programs, including the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the local wellness policy. The DWC includes representatives from the school and district level and reflects

the diversity of the community. The DWC membership is open to all members of the community, including parents, students, and representatives from a variety of positions and backgrounds from each school to develop, implement, monitor, and revise the School Wellness Policy.

The district's Child Nutrition Program Director/District Wellness Coordinator convenes the District Wellness Committee and facilitates the development of and updates to the local wellness policy, and ensures each school's compliance with the policy. The district requires that each school's designated wellness policy delegates support the local wellness policy implementation and monitor and report to the District Wellness Coordinator.

Policy Review and Monitoring

The CNP Director/District Wellness Coordinator will complete an annual review of the Wellness Policy using a Wellness Policy Review form constructed by the district to best evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the local Wellness Policy. Upon completion of the annual review, the district and individual schools will, as necessary, revise the Wellness Policy based on review findings and concerns associated with the policy goals and implementation. The review will be posted annually on the district's website to provide the community with an opportunity for involvement and an outlet for providing feedback and comments. Any changes or updates to the Wellness Policy will be updated on the district website. The district website also serves as a means of providing contact information for district personnel associated with the local wellness policy.

The superintendent and designee, CNP Director/District Wellness Coordinator, will ensure compliance of all schools with the district's Wellness Policy, including nutrition education and physical activities. Within each school, principals will ensure their compliance with the policy and keep local documentation to support adherence to policy guidelines.

Policies Guiding School Nutrition: School Nutrition staff will ensure compliance with all state and federal nutrition policies and guidelines at each lunchroom/serving site for schools within the district. Covington County Schools participates in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program, and all meals served to students are in compliance with the requirements of both of these USDA programs. Child nutrition staff receives annual professional development and training in food and nutrition in compliance with USDA's Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Programs. An evaluation is conducted annually of each school's nutrition program to determine their compliance with these policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Nutrition Education:

Covington County Schools partners annually with the local Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) office for Covington County to implement a childhood obesity prevention program to elementary students within the school district. *Body Quest* promotes nutrition education by teaching students about healthy eating, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption through the school lunch program, and providing tailored education from a SNAP-Ed educator. The program also extends into the community with a parent education component that engages parents in healthy eating and food preparation over the course of a 15-week period. All schools within the district have an additional resource provided through the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries. The Alabama Harvest of the Month program includes complete lesson plans that are interactive and engaging to educate students on healthy eating. The Harvest of the Month Program exposes students to a variety of locally grown fruits or vegetables in season during each month of the year in a format that includes hands-on activities and opportunities to increase student access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Each school has the flexibility of determining how education will be achieved and when they will provide the nutritional education to their students throughout the school year. Each school will maintain their own records of implementation locally and provide those documents as needed for review purposes.

Physical Activity:

All Covington County students in grades PK-8 will receive daily education and activities related to physical health and fitness, and students in grades 9-12 have the availability of selecting physical education on a daily basis. Physical Education teachers will follow the Alabama Course of Study standards for Physical Education, and classes will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. During daily physical education class, teachers will incorporate education and exposure to a wide variety of physical activities to actively involve all students in moderate to vigorous levels of exercise. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities throughout academic classes for students to engage in some level of physical activity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors and seated for extended periods of time, schools will provide students breaks when they are encouraged to stand and be active.

Mental and Emotional Health Education:

The Covington County School System will strive for mental and emotional wellness in students by providing annual training to staff on youth mental health awareness and suicide prevention. These trainings are to be provided by Covington County School's on staff Mental Health Coordinator. For students, annual mental health education will be provided annually to students individually, in small groups, and/or in larger classrooms of students. At minimum, students will receive suicide awareness education three times over their academic career, occurring in 4th, 7th, and 10th grades. The district also has a separate policy for identifying students in need of assistance from the certified Mental Health Counselor, and that policy and its protocols will run concurrently with the Covington County Schools Wellness Policy. CCS also partners with BASE Education, which is a social-emotional learning curriculum which offers K-12 students individual and/or group opportunities to enhance their mental health and wellness. This curriculum is implemented in all schools within the district.

NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

Lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages made available to students in their daily environment. Covington County Schools establishes the following guidelines for all foods and beverages sold or served to students during the school day. For the purpose of competitive food standards implementation, the term 'school day' refers to the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. During the official school day, schools may only market and feature foods and beverages that are consistent with the Smart Snacks in Schools nutritional guidelines. Students in grades K-12 will receive engaging instruction on nutrition to teach the skills needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition education will be integrated with requirements of the Alabama Course of Study's Health Education standards.

- Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines are established by the USDA. Covington County Schools complies with all guidelines set forth in the Smart Snacks in Schools standards. It requires the following of all foods and beverages sold in schools:
- Foods must be a "whole grain-rich" grain product
- Foods must have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food
- Foods must be a combination of food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable

To meet Smart Snack Standards, all competitive foods sold in schools must also meet certain nutrient requirements:

Calorie Limits:

200 or less calories for snack items

350 or less calories for entrée items

Sodium Limits:

200 mg or less for snack items

480 mg or less for entrée items

Fat Limits:

- Total Fat: 35% of calories or less
- Saturated Fat: Less than 10% of calories
- Trans. Fat: 0 grams

Sugar Limits: 35% or less of weight from total sugars

Accompaniments must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item sold to help control the amount of calories, fat, sugar, and sodium added to foods.

Examples of these include: cream cheese, salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, pickles, pickle relish, dips, sauces, and butter.

School Definitions:

- Elementary Schools—Pre-K through Grade 5
- Middle Schools—Grades 6 through 8
- High Schools—Grades 9 through 12

Beverages

All schools may sell:

- Plain water (there is no portion limit for plain, unflavored water for any age/grade group)
**Potable drinking water is also available to students free of charge during all meal service times. Water fountains, refilling stations, and/or watering stations are provided for student use in each school cafeteria to provide access to drinking water with all meals served to students.
- Unflavored low-fat milk
- Unflavored or flavored fat-free milk and milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (no added sweeteners)

Portion size limitations for each grade group include:

- Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions of milk or juice, but no carbonated beverages of any kind.
- Middle and High Schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of milk or juice.
- There is no portion size limit for plain water.

Additional guidelines for high school students include the following “no calorie” and “low calorie” beverage options:

- No more than 20-ounce portions of calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation); and other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain less than 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or 10 calories or less per 20 fluid ounces.
- No more than 12 ounce portions of beverages with 40 calories or less per 8 fluid ounces, or 60 calories or less per 12 fluid ounces.

School Nurses: This policy does not apply to school nurses during the course of providing health care to individual students.

Celebrations: Schools (pre-K through 6) should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Schools (Grade 7 through 12) should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to once celebration per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

Schools and school personnel are encouraged to use the USDA’s Smart Snack Calculator (<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>) to help determine whether or not foods or beverages meet the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines.

Food Sold/Served in the Cafeteria

Serving sizes will comply with the meal pattern requirements as described by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations. Foods served and/or sold

through the cafeteria shall adhere to the Smart Snacks in Schools standards established by the USDA and the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, as well as guidelines for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Portion sizes, calories, sodium, fat, and sugar limits must comply with the requirements as described by the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards. This policy does not restrict what parents may provide for their own child's lunch or snack. However, no fast food or labeled carbonated drinks may be brought into the school cafeteria with competitive wrapping.

A copy of the nutritional meal pattern, including required food components, calorie and sodium targets, and other nutritional guidelines for the National School Lunch Program can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-meal-pattern-chart>. The nutritional information for the School Breakfast Program can be found at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/meal-pattern-chart>.

Fundraising Activities

Fundraising activities that involve the selling of food should reinforce food choices that promote overall health. This includes all fundraising activities that take place during school hours, including the times that students may gather on campus in the mornings before school begins or in the afternoons immediately following school dismissal. This means that events outside of the normal school day are not affected by this recommendation and may select items for sale in concession stands, etc. that do not meet this criteria as long as it does not conflict the district's position for foods during the normal school day hours. Allowable fundraising on school campuses include:

- Foods that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in schools standards, but are not sold in competition with school meals (Example: fruit).
- Foods that do not meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards but are not consumed at school (Example: cookie dough sales).
- Non- food items (example: wrapping paper, kitchen utensils, school supplies)

- Food fundraisers that meet exempt fundraising definition

Exempt Fundraiser Definition: An exempt food fundraiser is defined as food items sold that do not meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards and are sold during the school day. A school may sponsor up to 30 exempt fundraisers per year, for no more than 1 day each in length. Exempt fundraiser food is prohibited from being sold as an a la cart item, in vending machines or school stores, or before school on school campus. Schools may not exceed the 30 day limit. Foods sold as part of exempt fundraisers may not be sold one hour before or after school meal periods. For example, if lunch ends at 1:00, a fundraiser could not start until 2:00. Each school must complete an Exempt Fundraisers Form annually to be kept on file by the CNP Director in the Child Nutrition office.

Exempt Food Fundraiser Procedures:

- **School Principals** ensure the implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in Schools standards and complete the Exempt Fundraisers Form twice annually. Upon completion, approval, and signature of this form, it will be provided to the CNP Director. Documentation provided upon request by the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE).
- **Superintendent** completes the Attestation of Compliance with Alabama Implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in Schools and Fundraising Activities forms. A copy of the completed attestation document will be provided to the CNP Director annually.
- **Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Director** places a copy of the Alabama's Implementation of USDA Smart Snacks in School and Exempt Fundraisers Form in the wellness policy file. Documentation provided upon request by the ALSDE.

- a. Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (79 P.L. 396, 60 Stat.230)

- b. Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010
- c. Federal Register, Vol. 78, No. 125, Friday, June 28, 2013, Rules and Regulations
- d. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, FNS-466, December 2013
- e. U.S. Department of Agriculture Memo SP 36-2014, Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards and Exempt Fundraisers

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