

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, UNDIRECTED PLAY AND STUDENT DISCIPLINE

It is the policy of the New Milford Board of Education (the “Board”) to promote the health and well-being of district students by encouraging healthy lifestyles including promoting physical exercise and activity as part of the school day.

For the purposes of this policy, a “school employee” is defined as (1) a teacher, substitute teacher, school administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, school counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional or coach employed by the Board or working in the district schools, or (2) any other individual who, in the performance of his or her duties, has regular contact with students and who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the district schools pursuant to a contract with the Board.

I. Deprivation of Physical Exercise Period or Undirected Play Period as a Form of Discipline

For elementary school students, the Board includes a time of not less than twenty (20) minutes in total, during the regular school day, to be devoted to physical exercise, except that a planning and placement team (“PPT”) may develop a different schedule for students requiring special education and related services.

The administration may include additional time, beyond the twenty minutes required for physical exercise, devoted to undirected play during the regular school day for elementary school students.

In an effort to promote physical exercise and undirected play, the Board prohibits school employees from disciplining elementary school students by preventing them from participating in the full 20 minutes of time devoted to physical exercise or additional time devoted to undirected play during the regular school day, except in accordance with this policy or as determined by a student’s Section 504 team or PPT.

A. *Physical Exercise Period*

School employees may prevent or otherwise restrict a student from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline only under the following circumstances:

- 1) When a student poses a danger to the health or safety of other students or school personnel; or
- 2) If there are two or more periods devoted to physical exercise in a school day, then when the prevention or restriction of physical exercise is limited to the period devoted to physical exercise that is the shortest in duration, provided that the student still participates in at least twenty minutes of physical exercise in a school day.

School employees may prevent or restrict a student from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day as a form of discipline, in accordance with this policy, only one time during a school week, unless the student is a danger to the health or safety of other students or school personnel.

School employees may not prevent or restrict a student from participating in the entire time devoted to physical exercise in the regular school day if such prevention or restriction is related to the student's failure to complete school work on time or to the student's academic performance.

This policy distinguishes between a) discipline that is imposed before the time devoted to physical exercise begins and b) discipline imposed during such time devoted to physical exercise or methods used to redirect a student's behavior during such time. School personnel may impose discipline during time devoted to physical exercise as a result of student's behavior during such time, if such discipline is in accordance with Board policies and procedures. School personnel may also use methods to redirect a student's behavior, in the event such behavior warrants redirection, during the time devoted to physical exercise. For clarity, the prohibition against preventing or restricting a student's participation in the time devoted to physical exercise shall apply to student conduct that occurs prior to the physical exercise time, rather than during the physical exercise time.

B. Undirected Play Period

School employees may not discipline elementary school students by preventing them from participating in the full time devoted to undirected play, if any, during the regular school day, except when a student poses a danger to the health or safety of other students or school personnel, or as determined by a student's Section 504 team or PPT.

II. Prohibition on Compulsion of Physical Activity as a Form of Discipline

For all students, the Board prohibits school employees from disciplining students by requiring students to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline during the regular school day.

III. Disciplinary Action for Failure to Follow Policy

Any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Any contracted individual who provides services to or on behalf of students enrolled in the district and who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy may be subject to having the individual's contract for services suspended by the district.

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes:

§ 10-221o Lunch periods. Recess. Boards to adopt policies addressing limitation of physical exercise

§ 10-221u Boards to adopt policies addressing the use of physical activity as discipline

Public Act No. 22-81 “An Act Expanding Preschool and Mental and Behavioral Services for Children”

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NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New Milford, Connecticut