

## **Cambridge Public Schools Wellness Policy Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

Physical activity and healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well being. In recognition that health and physical education, and breakfast, lunch and recess are integral parts of the educational program, the Cambridge Public Schools have created these guidelines to help ensure the health and welfare of each student attending the Cambridge Public Schools and to provide guidance to school personnel and parents/guardians in the areas of physical education, nutrition, health, and food service.

### **Health and Physical Education**

#### **Physical Education**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that school administration will make every effort to schedule physical education classes and related physical activities for all students. The Physical Education Department will seek to ensure that all classes will have at least fifty percent (50%) or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has issued National Standards for Physical Education which may provide additional guidance to principals in scheduling physical education for students.

Physical Education will not be substituted with any other activities and physical activity will not be used for punishment. For example, students will not run laps as a punishment. Additionally, students will not be excluded from a Physical Education class except if: (i) the removal is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of other students and staff and/or is related to the students engaging in conduct that is violative of the codes of conduct set forth in the *Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* and/or in school-based rules or other Cambridge Public School policies, or (ii) parental permission has been given for the student's removal.

The Cambridge Public Schools through the central office and principals will seek to ensure that all physical education will be taught by well-prepared specialists who are certified/certifiable by the state to teach physical education. All physical education teachers are expected to participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver a quality physical education program.

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the physical education curriculum will help students develop the knowledge, motor skills, self- management skills, attitudes, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives. The Health Physical Education and Athletics Department will seek to ensure that the curriculum will:

- Emphasize knowledge and skills for a lifetime of regular activity
- Adhere to the Massachusetts State Frameworks for health and physical education
- Provide a wide range of physical activities
- Feature cooperative as well as competitive games
- Teach self-management as well as movement skills
- Promote participation in physical activities outside of school
- Administer the Physical Fitness Test in grades K-8
- Provide tools and knowledge for fitness self assessment in grades 9-12
- Provide Project Adventure activities (i.e., team building, positive risk-taking) in all schools
- Provide activities for students of all abilities
- Reduce injuries

- Reduce/minimize sports related injuries with use of appropriate safety and protective equipment for physical education, intramural and interscholastic sports.

Additionally, it is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the high school will, on an annual basis, inform students and their parents/guardians of the requirements and procedures to be followed when seeking permission to participate in an organized program of instructional physical activity in lieu of taking a physical education course.

### **Health Education**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will ensure that all K-8 students receive health education the equivalent of once a week and that high school students are scheduled into the mandatory 9<sup>th</sup> grade health education class. It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will assign teachers to teach health education to grades 6-8 and that principals will seek to ensure that all elementary teachers take the Teaching Health Education professional development course, unless their pre-service teacher training program included a comprehensive health education course. The HPEA department will seek to provide resources to support the teaching of health education and to ensure that nutrition education is included in every health education course. The Health Physical Education and Athletics Department will work with Principals to ensure that each school is in compliance with the parent notification law for sexuality education.

### **Health Services**

School health services are provided by the Cambridge Public Health Department through an agreement with the Cambridge Public Schools. The school health services program is dedicated to helping students stay healthy and in school so they can reach their academic potential. Program staff includes registered nurses, nutritionists, vision and hearing specialists, and health aides.

School nurses provide first aid, medication administration, health counseling, and health education. The school nurses are responsible for linking families to primary care providers, advising school staff, and ensuring that all school children are appropriately immunized. The school health services program provides full-time coverage in all public schools.

School nutritionists collaborate with the Cambridge Public Schools Food Service Program to increase the number of healthy and appealing food choices available to students. The school nutritionists also provide classroom education, organize school-based outreach programs for families, and strive to create a healthy nutritional environment in the schools.

Hearing and vision specialists provide state-mandated screenings to Cambridge Public School children. Staff in the school health services program also offer families medical referrals and other resources.

Supervision and oversight of the School Health Program is provided by the Cambridge Public Health Department's Director of Public Health and School Health Nursing Services, the Clinical Manager of School Health Services, and the Medical Director of School Health.

### **Recess**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that recess provides opportunities for physical activity which helps students to stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that all elementary schools will provide a daily recess for all students. Further, it is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that students in grades K-8 will have at least 20 minutes of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which the schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Principals will encourage the scheduling of extra recess for

kindergartners. Principals will examine the feasibility of having recess before lunch, especially in the younger grades.

The Cambridge Public Schools recognizes that recess is a necessary education support component for all children. It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that Physical Education teachers will teach students active games for recess time. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will inform teachers that it is not recommended to deny students recess as a means of punishment or to make up work unless under unusual circumstances and/or a student denial of recess is a consequence of circumstances during recess.

### **Recess Supervision**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that recess will be supervised by school staff in such a way as to encourage safe and active play. Adults who monitor recess are expected to intervene when a child's physical or emotional safety is at risk. It is expected that bullying or aggressive behavior will be prohibited and all safety rules will be enforced.

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will seek to ensure professional development for staff involved in recess supervision in the following areas: promotion of active games and play, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, universal precautions, conflict management and bullying prevention. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that classroom and Physical Education teachers will teach students safe ways to use equipment and to play together.

## **Safety**

### **Winter Weather Safety**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will inform parents that they are expected to send students to school dressed appropriately for the weather and that any families that need help obtaining winter outerwear should contact their school's Family Liaison. Students who do not have appropriate winter or rain wear may need to be kept inside, but the other students should be expected to participate in outside recess. Each principal or designee will determine whether the temperature or wind chill are severe enough to cancel recess. Principals are encouraged not to cancel recess due to weather, unless absolutely necessary. A basic framework for weather decisions is below, more detail (including wind-chill) can be found at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/hcci/common/pdf/weatherwatch.pdf>

Below 10 degrees: Indoor Recess

Below 15 degrees: Shortened recess

Below 32 degrees: Coat, long pants, gloves & hats as appropriate

### **Heat and Sun Safety**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will put measures into place to:

- promote or require student use of protective items such clothing, hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, and lip balm during all outdoor activities.
- notify families prior to field trips and prolonged outdoor events that they are expected to prepare their child accordingly for activities in sun or heat.
- provide adequate hydration for students
- assess the practicality of rescheduling outdoor activities that take place during the hours of peak sun intensity and/or heat

### **Safety**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that play areas, facilities and equipment used for physical activity on school grounds shall meet accepted safety standards for design, installation and maintenance. The Cambridge Public Schools through the principals and central office will work with the

City of Cambridge Department of Public Works to ensure that recess equipment and facilities are checked regularly for safety. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will identify a school staff member who will check the playground daily for broken glass and other dangerous objects. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that if it comes to anyone's attention that equipment is found worn, broken or in need of repair, that it will be promptly reported to the Principal.

### **Injuries**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the principal will put measures in place to insure that school staff are aware that any injuries that are sustained during the school day will be handled by the school nurse. (See Health Services above).

## **Promoting Physical Activity**

### **Integrating Physical Activity into the School Day**

Recognizing that the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity for students is at least 60 minutes per day, the Cambridge Public Schools through its central office and school principals will seek to provide opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Additionally, in order to encourage students to fully embrace regular physical activity as personal behavior, the Cambridge Public Schools through its principals will seek to put measures into place to encourage that:

- 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, as appropriate, into other subject lessons.
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate.

### **Reduce Inactivity**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will seek to discourage extended periods of sitting (two (2) or more hours). When activities, such as mandatory testing, make it necessary for students to remain sedentary for long periods of time, schools are expected to give students periodic opportunities during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will promote recreational screen time reduction by providing information and resources to families in order to promote decreasing student inactivity and increasing student physical activity.

### **Physical Education Opportunities Before and After School**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the Health Physical Education and Athletics Department, in collaboration with all elementary and secondary schools, will offer extracurricular physical education activity programs before or after school in an effort to increase the students' over all physical activity time. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the Health Physical Education and Athletics Department will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students.

### **Walking/Biking to School**

The Cambridge Public Schools, through its central office and school principals will encourage students to commute to and from school in an "active" manner consistent with the school district's transportation policy. In addition, the Cambridge Public Schools through its central office and school principals will seek to support walking and biking by providing resources, including:

- Information about safe walking and biking to school
- Safe bike parking at schools
- Crossing guards at intersections close to elementary schools

- Walking maps for families and children

### **Wellness Policy Monitoring**

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that in each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy and guidelines and will report as needed on the school's compliance to the Superintendent or designee. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that school food service staff will ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy and guidelines around nutrition and the nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on compliance to the Superintendent or designee. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that the Health Physical Education and Athletics Department will ensure compliance with health, physical education and athletics areas of the Wellness Policy and guidelines and will report on the school district's compliance to the Superintendent or designee.

#### **Policy Review & Evaluation**

The Wellness Policy will be reviewed every 3 years by superintendent or designee and modified if needed to be in compliance with state and national laws and standards.

The evaluation process will include evaluations of eight modules by the following superintendent's designees:

<b>Module</b>		<b>Designee</b>
<b>Module 1:</b>	School Health and Safety Policies and Environment	Safety and Security Department HPEA Department
<b>Module 2:</b>	Health Education	School Principals
<b>Module 3:</b>	Physical Education and other Physical Activity Programs	Physical Education Teachers
<b>Module 4:</b>	Nutrition Services	Food Services
<b>Module 5:</b>	School Health Services	School Health Nurses/Director
<b>Module 6:</b>	School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services	Office of Special Needs
<b>Module 7:</b>	Health Promotion of Staff	Human Resources
<b>Module 8:</b>	Family and Community Involvement	Family Liaisons

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 2005. 6th Edition. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 2005. Available at: <http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines>

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Physical Education and Sport, [http://www.aahperd.org/NASPE/template.cfm?template=ns\\_children.html](http://www.aahperd.org/NASPE/template.cfm?template=ns_children.html), 2006

<sup>1</sup> The Wellness Policy Evaluation is based on the School Health Index provided by the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyYouth/SHI>