

# **School Wellness Policy**

## **Pearl River Central Middle School**

### **2025-2026**

The Pearl River County School Board affirms its commitment to providing a healthy environment for students and staff. The board directs the superintendent to coordinate the components of the district wellness policy. The wellness policy shall be developed with the involvement of the school health council. This wellness policy shall be reviewed and approved by the school board annually.

#### **Goal:**

All students at Pearl River Central Middle School shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy choices that promote healthy lifestyles and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime.

With the help of parents/guardians, physicians, and staff, all students in the district with known chronic diseases shall possess the knowledge of their disease process and the ability to manage their disease for a lifetime.

All staff members at Pearl River Central Middle School are encouraged to model healthy eating and moderate physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, Pearl River Central Middle School adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to implementing a coordinated approach to school health. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Specifically, the federal legislation requires:

- Specific goals for nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designated to promote student wellness. LEA's are required to review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining these goals.

- Standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day that consistent with Federal Nutrition Stands
- Standards for all foods and beverages provided but not sold to students during the school day (e.g., in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives).
- Policies for food and beverage marketing that allow marketing and advertising of only those foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks in School Nutrition standards.

### **Commitment to Nutrition**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
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- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school food service staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2001)
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2002).
- Include goals for nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities to promote student wellness.
- Implement Nutrition Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4011),
  - Healthy food and beverage choices;
  - Healthy food preparation
  - Marketing of healthy food choices to students, staff and parents;
  - Food preparation ingredients and products
  - Minimum/maximum time allotted for students and staff lunch and breakfast;

- ❑ Availability of food items during the lunch and breakfast periods of the Child Nutrition Breakfast and Lunch Programs;
  - ❑ Methods to increase participation in the Child Nutrition School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.
- Establish guidelines in accordance with USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition standards and the Mississippi Beverage and Snack Regulations for all foods available on the school campus during the school day and the sale of food items for fundraising along with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood-obesity. (see Nutrition Environment and Services section of the *Tools that Work - Your Guide to Success for Building A Healthy School* Toolkit that is found on the Office of Healthy Schools website at <http://mdek12.org/OHS>).
- Establish standards for all foods and beverages provided to students during the school day (e.g., in classroom parties, classroom snacks brought by parents, or other foods given as incentives).
- Use Smart Snacks resources to educate the school community about the importance of offering health snacks for students and staff members.
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Product Calculator is an effective online instrument that has been determined by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to be accurate in assessing product compliance with the federal requirements for Smart Snacks in Schools. The calculator can be used for food and beverage products. <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>
- Encourage students to make food choices based on the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) and ChooseMyPlate resources, by emphasizing menu options that feature baked (rather than fried foods), whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, and reduced-fat dairy products. Read more about HHFKA at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-06-28/pdf/2013-15249.pdf> and ChooseMyPlate at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
- Establish a cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.
- Make school meals accessible to all students with a variety of delivery strategies, such as lunch in the classroom and grab-n-go breakfast.
- Limit use of foods as rewards for student accomplishment and eliminate the withholding of food as punishment.
- Encourage all school-based organizations to use services, contests, non-food items, and/or healthful foods for fundraising programs. The sale of candy as a

fund-raiser is strongly discouraged. Alternative fundraising ideas can be downloaded at

<http://www.healthysd.gov/Documents/HealthyFundraisingIdeas.pdf>

- Make available nutrition information for parents, including nutrition analysis of school meals and resources to help parents to improve food that they serve at home.

## **Commitment to Food Safe Schools**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Implement a food safety program based on HACCP principles for all school meals, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs and ensure that the food service permit is current for the school site. HACCP Principles for K-12 schools can be downloaded at:  
[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Food\\_Safety\\_HACCPGuidance.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf)
- Develop a food safety education plan for all staff and students, consistent with Fight Bac® ([www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)) and other national standards for safe food handling at home and in school.
- Ensure that all staff have received instructions to support food safety on the school campus. Food Safety resources have been developed by the Office of Child nutrition to assist with the training of school staff members . These resources which include a training power-point presentation, food Safety Post Test and Food Safety Post Test Answer Key can be found on the Office of Healthy School website at <http://www.mdek12.org/OHS>.
- All school personnel (school board members, administrators, teachers, school nurses, instructional and health services paraprofessionals, foodservice staff, custodians and facilities managers, and administrative support staff) will receive copies of the Local School Wellness Policy including food safety policies and procedures and relevant professional development.
- Adequate access to hand washing facilities and supplies will be available whenever and wherever students, staff, and families prepare, handle, or consume food.
- The food safety assurance plan must address strategies that minimize risks for students and staff who have food allergies and intolerances.

## **Commitment to Physical Activity**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Provide 150 minutes per week of activity-based instruction for all students grades 6-8. (In accordance with Section 37-13-134, Mississippi Code of 1972, ann., reference-2014 Mississippi Public Schools Accountability Standard 27.1).
- Provide Physical Education/Activity in accordance with the Physical Education Rules and Regulations as approved by the State Board of Education in compliance with Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student-centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Instruction must be based on Mississippi Physical Education Frameworks.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007.
- Address concussions by adopting and implementing a policy for students in grades 7-8 who participate in activities sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA). This policy will include a concussion recognition course that has been endorsed by the Mississippi Department of Health. This course will provide information on the nature and risk of concussions for students participating in athletics. Also included in the policy, parents/guardians will be provided with a concussion policy before the start of regular school athletic season.
- Establish or enhance physical activity opportunities (like walking clubs or fitness challenges) for staff and/or parents.
- Provide staff-monitored recreational activities that promote moderate physical activity during all outdoor and indoor recess times.
- Collaborate with local recreational departments and youth fitness programs to promote participation in lifelong physical activities.
- Create opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs like intramurals, clubs, and at the secondary level, interscholastic athletics.

## **Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007, which requires 45 minutes per week of health education instruction as defined by the State Board of Education for grades 6-8. Middle school students will

receive 45 minutes per week of health education in their physical education class or elective.

- Instruction must be based on the Mississippi Contemporary Health for grades 6-8.
- Emphasize the disease prevention strand in the 2012 Mississippi Comprehensive Health Curriculum.
- Participate in USDA nutrition programs such as *Team Nutrition Schools*. The school will conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community. The school team responsible for planning nutrition activities will include school food service staff, school nurses, health and PE teachers, coaches, and additional staff, as appropriate.

### **Commitment to a Healthy School Environment**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Ensure that there are no pad locks or chains on exit doors; exits should never be obstructed (in accordance with Mississippi State Fire Code). Ensure that all exit signs are illuminated and clearly visible.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet [www.msdssearch.com](http://www.msdssearch.com)).
- Ensure that playgrounds and break areas are safe (Refer to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's [Handbook for Public Playground Safety](http://www.cpsc.com) ([www.cpsc.com](http://www.cpsc.com)) for federal guidelines for playground safety.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Complete yearly maintenance of the heating and cooling system in our schools to minimize children's exposure to allergens that can aggravate the chronic disease, asthma; check coils, filters, belts, etc. in order to maintain safe operation and healthy air quality.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.
- Every school will have an anti-bullying policy that outlines procedures that deal with bullying situations within the school.
- Ensure that two means of egress are available in each classroom in case of an emergency; if there is only one door, designate a window (properly sized) as a means of egress.
- Never use extension cords as a permanent source of electricity anywhere on a school campus.

The Pearl River Central Middle School will comply with the applicable rules and

regulations of the State Board of Education in the operation of its transportation program (in accordance with the MS Code 37-41-53; State Board of Education Policies 7903, 7904, and 7909; and Accreditation Standard #35).

- Inspect all buses on a quarterly basis and ensure that they are well maintained and clean.
- Require that all bus drivers have a valid bus driver certificate and a commercial driver's license and operate the bus according to all specified safety procedures. Maintain a record of yearly motor vehicle reports on each bus driver and evidence that each driver has received two hours of in-service training per semester. (SB Policy 7903)
- Conduct bus evacuation drills at least two times each year. (SB Policy 7904)

The Pearl River County School District will comply with the requirements for Safe and Healthy Schools:

- Maintain a comprehensive School Safety Plan on file that has been approved annually by the local school board. (MS Code 37-3-81 and 37-3-82(2); and Accreditation Standard #37.1); see the School Safety Manual and the MDE School Occupational Safety and Crisis Response Plan.
- Board Policy EBB (1990) prohibits the possession of pistols, firearms or weapons by any person on school premises or at school functions. Mississippi Code §37-11-18 (1996) requires any student who possesses a knife, a handgun, other firearm or any other instrument considered to be dangerous and capable of causing bodily harm or who commits a violent act on educational property be subject to automatic expulsion for one calendar year. The superintendent of the school is authorized to modify the period of time for expulsion on a case-by-case basis.
- Prohibits students from possessing tobacco on any educational property, Mississippi Code §97-32-9 (2000). Mississippi Code §97-32-29 (2000) further prohibits the use of tobacco on any educational property for adults who, if in violation, would be subject to a fine and issued a citation by a law enforcement officer. Educational property is defined as any public school building or bus, campus, grounds, athletic field, or other property used or operated during a school-related activity.
- Maintain the Pearl River County School District Return to Learn Plan/Covid Procedures.

The Pearl River County School District will provide facilities that meet the criteria of: (MS Code 37-7-301 (c) (d) (j); 37-11-5, 49 and 45-11-101; and Accreditation Standard #36).

- Provide facilities that are clean.
- Provide facilities that are safe.
- Provide proper signage that explains tobacco, weapons, and drugs are prohibited on the school campus and at school functions.
- Provide operational facilities that are equipped and functional to meet the instructional needs of students and staff (in accordance with the Mississippi School Design Guidelines).
- Provide air conditioning in all classrooms, Code §37-17-6(2) (2000).

### **Commitment to Quality Health Services**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Ensure all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the 2013 *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care. (latest edition)*
- Provide for teachers and staff training regarding signs and symptoms of asthma. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37) School nurse to provide yearly in-service.
- Every child who has been diagnosed with asthma must have an asthma action plan on file in the school nurse's office as provided by the physician.
- Know the district anaphylaxis policy. Providing training by a healthcare professional, preferably a school nurse, for the individuals that will be responsible for implementing the policy at the school site. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37) Yearly training will be done by the school nurse to delegated personnel using the Assisted Self-Administration Curriculum from the MS Board of Nursing (2010 latest edition). School administrator is responsible for delegating personnel.
- Offer comprehensive health services for all students in grades 6-8, through the employment of school nurses, as a means to academic success.
- Optimize the provision of health services by utilizing an effective school nurse-to-student ratio.



- Collaborate with other school staff to provide health services as part of a Coordinated School Health Program. Medical needs will be addressed to “need to know” personnel and HIPPA guidelines will be followed.
- Work with students, parents, and local healthcare providers to effectively manage and treat chronic diseases.
- Promote healthy lifestyles through school and community events (PTA meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).

### **Commitment to Providing Counseling, Psychological and Social Services**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Adhere to the details outlined in the Licensure Guidelines (436 or 451) when hiring guidance counselors and psychologists. The state does not have a policy specifically outlining the requirements for a school social worker. For licensure as a social worker in the state of Mississippi, a candidate must: provide verification of a baccalaureate degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and scores a minimum of 70 on the ASWB basic exam.
- Abide by Mississippi Code 37-9-79 (Amended 2014) as the school provides for counseling and guidance for students.
- Hire school guidance counselors with a minimum of a Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development. Mississippi Code 37-9-79
- Hire school counselors who agree to abide by the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics.
- Ensure that all school guidance counselors provide comprehensive counseling services such as:
  - Academic and personal/social counseling
  - Student assessment and assessment counseling
  - Career and educational counseling
  - Individual and group counseling
  - Crisis intervention and preventive counseling

- Provide all licensed teachers and principals with in-service suicide prevention training as directed by MS Code 37-3-101.
- Referrals to community agencies
- Educational consultations and collaborations with teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders
- Education and career placement services
- Follow-up counseling services
- Conflict resolution
- Professional school counselors must spend a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of their contractual time to the delivery of services to students as outlined by the American School Counselor Association.
- Other counseling duties or other duties as assigned by the school principal

### **Commitment to Family and Community Involvement**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Invite parents and the community members to participate in the school health planning by serving on the School Health Council (SHC).

### **Commitment to Employee Wellness**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Provide health promotion programs for school staff to include opportunities for physical activity, health screenings, nutrition education, weight management, smoking cessation, and stress reduction and management.
- Encourage after school health and fitness sessions for school staff.

### **Commitment to Marketing a Healthy School Environment**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Eliminate advertising or promoting unhealthy food choices on the school campus. Advertising must be restricted to only those food and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards.
- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting (e.g. brochures, flyers, bookmarks, book covers, and health fair). All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.

- Involve students in planning for a healthy school environment. Students will be asked for input and feedback through the use of student surveys and attention will be given to their comments.
- Promote healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at school events (e.g. health fair, school registration, parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, open houses, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Market new foods by using serving line sampling.

### **Commitment to Implementation**

Pearl River Central Middle School will:

- Establish a plan for implementation of the school wellness policy.
- Designate one or more persons to ensure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.
- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy. (Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Section 37-13-134).
- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.

### **School Health Council 2025-2026: Pearl River Central Middle School**