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MMUUSD Wellness Policy

Purpose

It is the intent of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District to comply with all applicable federal and state requirements (as outlined in the Vermont Local Wellness Policy Guide, updated October 2023). In accordance with those requirements, this local wellness policy (LWP) (hereafter referred to as "this policy") has been developed in consultation with parents, students, school food service program/school food authority personnel, physical education and health education teachers, school board members, school administration, members of the public, and school health professionals, which may include school nurses, school counselors, school-based clinicians, school social workers, or behavioral health professionals.

Policy Statement

We recognize the strong link between wellness and academic achievement. Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District's wellness policy is designed to promote student health, wellness, and ensure that school meal nutrition guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards. The district's wellness policy contains goals related to nutrition education, nutrition promotion, guidelines for all foods available on school grounds, physical education, physical activity, and other school-based activities to promote student wellness, safety, and social and emotional growth. The District will review and consider evidence-based strategies and the Whole School, Whole Community and Whole Child (WSCC) model in determining these goals.

Goals for Nutrition Education

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we recognize the importance of weight-inclusive nutrition education to help our students develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime. A healthy diet plays a critical role in preventing chronic disease and supporting good health, and nutrition education empowers students to make informed choices regarding the food they eat.

A. The school district shall provide nutrition education as required by state law and regulations of the State Board of Education. In particular, the district shall provide a weight-inclusive nutrition component in its comprehensive health education curriculum and shall develop programs intended to accomplish applicable goals enumerated in the Vermont Education Quality Standards and Vermont Education Statute 16 V.S.A. §131 .

B. Nutrition education shall be conducted by licensed staff members.

C. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and electives as appropriate.
- Includes developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant and participatory activities that may include but are not limited to cooking demonstration or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens.

Goals for Nutrition Promotion

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we recognize the relationship between our students' access to good nutrition and their readiness to learn. We encourage participation in our school's food service program to meet students' nutritional needs. We also strive to create a culture that fosters healthy eating in our cafeterias and throughout our buildings.

- **A.** The district shall provide adequate space for eating and serving school meals.
- **B.** The district shall provide a clean and safe meal environment for students.
- **C.** The district shall establish meal periods that provide adequate time to eat and are scheduled at appropriate hours.
- **D.** Food shall not be withheld in district schools as a punishment or used as a reward except as part of a behavioral intervention plan developed by licensed professionals, whose content is subject to state and local grievance procedures under Section 504 and IDEA. [Corresponds to Vermont Agency of Education Model Local Wellness Policy - Nutrition Services/Guidelines for All Foods Available on School Campus #4] PLEASE NOTE: The restrictions regarding the use of food as a punishment or reward referenced directly above is distinct from and does not preclude food being provided as part of a learning opportunity and/or classroom or community celebrations/events.
- **E.** Schools will provide food service flexibility when feasible to increase meals access.
- **F.** Nutrition services will reference USDA geographic preference rules and seasonal and local agricultural information when planning school meal menus, to the extent practicable.
- **G.** The District will ensure that guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the United States Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to sections (a) and (b) of section 9A(a) and (b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

Nutrition Guidelines

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we strive to make the healthy choice the easy choice by offering a variety of healthy meal options that meet the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- **A.** The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs will meet the requirements provided in 7 CFR 210 and 7 CFR 220 (National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Guidelines.)
- **B.** The school district will provide MMUUSD families with information about the Household Income Form available on the Agency of Education website. Collecting household income information can help the district access federal and state education dollars. The school district will inform families about the Household Income Form in a communication that goes home to families at the start of every school year and upon request at any time. The form can also be found here: Household Income Form | Agency of Education.
- **C.** The district shall make free potable water available to children in the meal service areas.
- **D.** The district shall provide training opportunities as appropriate for food service and other staff members in areas of nutrition and wellness.
- **E.** All foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet the USDA Smart Snacks In Schools nutrition standards.

F. No child shall be denied a 'Class A' meal due to a lack of funds. In accordance with Act 64, Vermont's permanent universal meals law, MMUUSD offers universal meals through the Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2.

G. District fundraisers that occur during the school day will meet the USDA Smart Snacks In Schools nutrition standards.

H. The District is required to establish nutrition guidelines for all other foods provided, but not sold to students during the school day. Foods provided but not sold may include food that is part of a classroom celebration or provided by community organizations free of charge. The Pre-K - 8th-grade schools do not allow food from home to be shared with others due to potential allergy concerns. Pre-K-grade 8 families will be notified in advance of any food being served for celebrations. The food served in those schools will be allergy-safe. See individual school handbooks for further details.

I. The superintendent or designee is responsible for ensuring that schools identify, near or at the beginning of serving lines, what foods constitute unit-priced reimbursable meals. 7 C.F.R. § 210.10(a)(2)

Goals for Physical Education

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we recognize the importance of physical education to help students understand the importance of a physically active lifestyle, develop the skills to engage in that lifestyle, and explore activities they can pursue throughout their lives. We create programming and opportunities to engage in physical education that will provide life-long health benefits. We utilize the CDC's Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Framework and the Vermont Agency of Education's adopted SHAPE America standards to inform our physical education policy and programming.

A. The district shall provide physical education classes for all students as required by Vermont's Education Quality Standards.

B. Physical education curriculum shall be proficiency-based for development and assessment of knowledge and skills for student physical literacy with an emphasis on the development of a physically active lifestyle. EQS Rule 2120.5, 16 V.S.A. § 136

C. Physical education shall be considered in design of an educational support that enables each student to access the general curriculum. Flexible, alternative pathways for proficiency-based learning in physical education shall be made equally accessible to all students. Adapted physical education shall be designed, delivered and assessed by a licensed physical education teacher in consultation with other colleagues (e.g. special educator, physical therapist), student and parents. Act 77 §941

D. Physical education will be taught, assessed and credit awarded by properly licensed educators. 16 V.S.A. §1692

E. Physical education teacher professional development shall be based on identified needs and aligned with other school or district-wide continuous improvement priorities. EQS rule 2121.3

F. Physical education shall benefit from thoughtful, periodic, content-specific program and professional performance review that drives continuous improvement. EQS rule 2121.4

Goals for Physical Activity

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we recognize the importance of physical activity to the mental and physical well-being of our student population, both now and throughout their lives. We

strive to provide programming and opportunities to engage in physical activity that will help our students better engage in their academic learning.

A. The district shall offer opportunities for students in grades K-12 to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity within or outside of the school day. Physical activity may include recess and movement built into the curriculum, but does not replace physical education classes.
B. All elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year.
C. The district will support classroom teachers in incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects.
D. Recess and other physical activity should be approached with the same importance as other learning opportunities. Whenever possible, physical activity will not be withheld as a consequence or for academic support.
E. The district encourages staff, students, and their families to participate in physical activity outside the school day. Allowing staff, students, and their families to use school recreational facilities during non-school hours is one way to increase opportunities to engage in physical activity. The information shall include the hours the facilities are open, any restrictions related to use, any programming offered on-site, and other relevant information. See facility rental guidelines.

Goals for Comprehensive Health Education

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we recognize the importance of comprehensive health education to help our students understand how their health can be impacted by a variety of factors, including their environment and decisions they make, and give them the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to best support their own physical and mental health. We utilize the National Health Education Standards and National Sexual Health Education Standards, adopted by the Vermont Agency of Education, to shape curriculum as part of our comprehensive health interdisciplinary framework.

A. The school district shall provide comprehensive health education designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health as required by state law and regulations of the State Board of Education and shall develop programs intended to accomplish applicable goals in accordance with the Vermont Education Quality Standards and Vermont Education Statute 16 V.S.A. §131 .
B. Health education will be taught, assessed and credit awarded by licensed educators. 16 V.S.A. §1692.
C. Schools will provide comprehensive health education that encourages the promotion and integration of health education throughout the school day and within various curriculum areas in addition to health education courses. This will be done to the extent practicable, under the supervision of the superintendent or designee, and aligned with state rules and standards.
D. Health education curriculum shall be proficiency-based for development and assessment of knowledge and skills for student health literacy. EQS Rule 2120.5, 16 V.S.A. § 136
E. Health education teacher professional development shall be based on identified needs and aligned with other school or district-wide continuous improvement priorities. EQS rule 2121.3
F. Health education shall benefit from thoughtful, periodic, content-specific program and professional performance review that drives continuous improvement. EQS rule 2121.4
G. While comprehensive health education is a core content area and required under state law, the State of Vermont does have a religious exemption statute regarding the teaching of disease to

include symptoms, development and treatment that can impact part of the health curriculum as well as other content areas.16 V.S.A. § 134.

Other School-based Activities to Promote Student Wellness

At Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, we embrace the philosophy of the Whole School, Whole Community and Whole Child (WSCC) model and use that framework to integrate wellness activities across the school setting and in accordance with evidence-based strategies such as those provided in Vermont's Local Wellness Policy Guide and at the discretion of the Superintendent or their designee.

A. The District will utilize school nurses in each school to encourage students and their families to establish and access their dental home to receive age-specific comprehensive oral health care annually, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics', Bright Futures – Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents- Periodicity Table and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

B. The District will utilize school nurses in each school to encourage students and their families to establish and access their medical home to receive age-specific health supervision visits (Well Care visits) annually, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics', Bright Futures – Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents- Periodicity Table.

C. The District will create a workplace and learning environment that supports and respects a lactating employee or student's decision to nurse and/or express milk during the school day and provides a private space to do so at each school and within our central office as needed. 21 V.S.A. § 305

D. The district shall seek partnerships with local health care providers in order to support health services to intervene with health challenges and ensure access or referral to health care services.

E. The district shall provide a variety of prevention and intervention services that support the mental, behavioral, and social-emotional health of students and promote success in the learning process.

F. In recognition of research showing that condom availability programs increase condom use, promote delayed sexual initiation or abstinence, provide medical care costs savings, and reduce HIV, STD, and unplanned pregnancy risk and in accordance with the Vermont Statute on Provision of Contraceptives (16 V.S.A. § 132), the District has adopted this condom availability procedure.

G. The District, supporting the importance of menstrual dignity and in recognition of the wellness-related importance of equitable access to menstrual products to all students who need them and in accordance with Vermont Statute on Provision of Menstrual Products (16 V.S.A. § 1432), has adopted this menstrual product availability procedure.

H. The District, in accordance with Act 56, 18 V.S.A. § 8151, shall ensure that school employees receive education that meets the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Quality Training Standards, pertaining to the prevention of, use of language regarding, and identification of eating disorders in youth.

I. The District, in accordance with the Vermont Model School Protocol for Suicide Prevention, and Act 56, 18 VSA § 8151 (Ch. 192), shall use a weight-inclusive lens to evaluate our curriculum and culture. We recognize that healthy bodies come in all sizes, and weight is not a reliable indicator of health and wellness. We encourage health and wellness behaviors in our community, to include "rejecting diet culture, eating a wide variety of food, listening to one's hunger/satiety cues, respecting one's body and moving one's body in a way that feels good." [1]

[1] Weight-Inclusive Nutrition (WIN) Research Group (uvm.edu)

J. The district shall strive to develop and maintain partnerships with community groups, organizations and local businesses to support student learning, development and health-related activities. Schools shall seek information, feedback, resources and services available from the community.
K. The District is committed to fostering a healthy work environment that promotes staff wellness and the modeling of healthy behaviors. The District will regularly measure and assess staff wellness via PATH. This may include reporting findings and providing recommendations to leadership including the Superintendent and School Board as well as developing a response plan to leverage assets and address opportunities for improvement.
L. The District is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy, safe and productive environment for all persons using our school. To that end, district schools are encouraged to participate in the Asthma-Friendly Schools Program through the Vermont Department of Health. The Coordinated School Health Team will develop an Environmental Health Policy.

Guidelines for Policy Implementation, Monitoring and Assessment

A. The District will convene a representative District Coordinated Team to establish goals for and oversee school health, wellness and safety policies and programs.
B. The Superintendent or their designee will be responsible for the oversight of this committee and its' work. The District Coordinated Health Team will have 6-12 active members, including representation from the community, school board, parents and caregivers, students, representatives of the school nutrition program, physical education teachers, health education teachers, school health professionals, and school administrators.
C. The District Coordinated Health Team will meet at least twice during the school year.
D. The district will permit parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, the school board, school administrators, and the general public to participate in the development, implementation, monitoring, and periodic review and update of this policy.
E. The superintendent or their designee shall periodically monitor district programs and curriculum to ensure compliance with this policy and any administrative procedures established to carry out the requirements of this policy.
F. The district shall periodically inform and update the public about the content and implementation of this policy, including the extent to which district schools are in compliance with this policy, the extent to which this policy compares to model local school wellness policies and a description of the progress made in attaining the goals of this policy.