



POLICY
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Guiding Principle

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf community and the Board of Trustees recognize the importance of promoting student and employee wellness, good nutrition, and physical activity that occurs on a regular basis. Students who are healthy and fit are better prepared to learn and better prepared to succeed in school. The School supports and promotes good nutrition and offers regular opportunities for physical activity and learning about personal health and safety, thereby contributing to the wellness of its children.

Purpose

To establish goals and expectations related to wellness by providing a healthy environment where students can eat nutritious meals, snacks, and beverages, get regular physical activity, and learn the importance of lifelong healthy behaviors. This policy adheres to federal and state mandates concerning the wellness of students and staff.

I. Health and Wellness Subcommittee

In accordance with RI General Law (16-21-28), the Rhode Island School for the Deaf has appointed a Wellness subcommittee, which will be known as the Wellness Committee (*see Addendum for Legal Reference*). The Wellness Committee will consist of members of the general public and staff (which will include at least one member of the Board of Trustees, at least one teacher, at least one administrator, students, at least one parent, one school-based health professional, and whenever possible, representatives of local and statewide nonprofit, health organizations.) The Wellness Committee will be chaired by the Administrator or the Board member and will report to the Board of Trustees.

The members of the Wellness Committee are responsible for:

- Collaborate and coordinate resources to enhance school health objectives
- Review and suggest updates to the Wellness Policy
- Make recommendations to the Director and Board of Trustees regarding issues related to:
 - a. Health education curriculum
 - b. Physical Education curriculum and Health Education curriculum
 - c. Nutrition and physical activity policies to promote the health and well-being of students and employees.

The Director will be responsible for the implementation of the policy and the school's goals. The Wellness Committee shall be responsible for reports to the Director and the Board of Trustees that reflect efforts to implement the Wellness Policy.

II. Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

Child Nutrition Programs And School Meals

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf will work closely with its Food Service Management Company (FSMC) to offer meals in compliance with the Nutrition Standards included in this policy and current USDA guidelines. The FSMC is responsible for proper food service operations. Students and their families will be provided with the nutritional content of all school meals.

Student Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf's Board of Trustees is committed to the health and wellness education of the student program. Nutrition education is necessary for students to understand what healthy eating means in order to adopt lifelong healthy eating behaviors at an early age. Nutrition education will be linked to the school environment and will be taught appropriately for the students' ages, reflect their cultures, and provide opportunities to practice nutrition skills.

Staff Nutrition and Wellness

The Wellness Committee and the Administration will develop a plan to encourage, promote, and support school and administrative staff health and wellness. The purpose of this is to encourage all staff to improve their own personal health and wellness, create positive role modeling, build the commitment of staff to promote the health of students, and build the commitment of staff to improve the school nutrition and physical activity environment.

Parent and Healthy Living Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will be provided to parents through handouts, postings on the school website, school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, and any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

III. Nutrition Guidelines for Reimbursable School Meal Programs

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf believes good nutrition needs to be modeled to help students learn about the importance of healthy eating. To achieve this, meals served during the day, as part of the fresh fruits and vegetables program, breakfast and lunch programs, and the after-school snack program will provide age-appropriate and balanced nutrition. All meals served at school will meet the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs and the Rhode Island Nutritional Requirements (*see Addendum for Legal Reference*).

National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

Rhode Island School for the Deaf's goal is to ensure that students eat healthy meals each day.

School Breakfast Program

Parents will be notified about the availability of school breakfast. Research indicates that eating a healthy breakfast is highly beneficial to students. The school will encourage parents to ensure all students eat a healthy breakfast, be it at home or at school, before beginning a day of learning. RISDeaf will make every effort to accommodate students arriving late to school to still have access to the school breakfast offerings.

Lunch

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf will make every effort to schedule lunch so that every student has at least 20 minutes to eat lunch. The lunchroom is structured to promote healthy eating habits. Parents will be notified about the availability of lunch to be purchased at school. Healthy menu options will be available both in print and electronically on the school website.

Free/reduced (alternative) applications are a part of all paperwork provided to families of students at the start of each school year and for all new students transferring to RISDeaf during the school year. Families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced lunch status if helpful. Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year and are available during registration or from the school office. The school is happy to offer confidential support to parents/guardians who would like help in completing the forms. All information provided is confidential and is not shared with other agencies.

At no time will RISDeaf staff publicly identify free/reduced status students or bring attention to any negative account balances.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

The mid-morning offerings consist of fresh fruits and vegetables as the primary snack provided through the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This allows students exposure to healthy food choices and allows an opportunity for a mid-morning refuel.

After-school meals served through the National School Lunch Program will also be provided for all students participating in all after-school programs and will make a positive contribution to students' diets.

Qualification of School Food Service Staff

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf's Food Service Management Company is responsible for providing training in food service operations, including professional development with content of food and nutrition for staff operating the food service program.

IV. Food Marketing and Food Promotion in Schools

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf will make every effort to limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the standards for school meals (USDA and RINR). The School will encourage and promote healthy foods, which include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and water.

Nutrition Standards for Other Foods and Beverages

RI School for the Deaf is committed to maintaining a high-quality wellness culture and which relies on the good nutritional quality of *all foods* available and sold to students and staff. To implement a wellness culture at the school, Rhode Island School for the Deaf believes it is important to communicate the message of healthy eating and to adhere to the Wellness Policy in all food-related events occurring during the school day, in school stores, health fairs, fundraisers, classroom events, rewards and school celebrations. No food shall be sold or distributed during the school day that competes with the National School Meal Program.

A La Carte Food and Vending Machines

By RI State Law (RI General Law 16-21-7), all food sold or served outside of the Reimbursable Meal Program must adhere to the nutrition standards for Vending and A La Carte foods in Schools (See *Addendum for Legal Reference*). All foods, snacks, and beverages sold on the school campus during the school day, outside of the reimbursable school meals program, will comply with current USDA nutrition standards for competitive and a la carte foods/beverages. In addition to water fountains in the building, vending machines with bottled water are also available in the gym area and in the lunchroom.

V. Food Rewards, Incentives, and Punishments

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf believes that school-based rewards must support the efforts put forth in its nutrition policies. The use of food rewards or incentives is strongly discouraged. The rare occasion when an exception is allowed should be thoughtfully planned and reported to the Wellness Committee by the Director.

VI. Fundraising

By RI General Law 16-21-7, all foods sold in schools must adhere to the nutrition standards for Vending and A La Carte foods in schools and cannot be sold during food meal service times. Schools are allowed to permit the sale of beverages and snacks that do not comply with these rules as part of fundraising in the following circumstances:

1. The items are sold by pupils of the school and the sale of those items takes place off and away from the premises of the school;

2. The items are sold by the pupils of the school and the sale of those items takes place after the end of the school day; or
3. The items are sold during a school-sponsored pupil activity at the end of the school day.

All fundraising projects sponsored by staff, students, or parent organizations (outside the school day) are encouraged to follow the Rhode Island School for the Deaf's nutritional standards and should support healthy eating and wellness habits. Fundraisers that promote physical activity and do not include food are strongly preferred.

VII. Classroom and School Celebrations and Functions

All food brought into school from the outside with the intent to be served to students in any school setting must comply with food safety and sanitation requirements. The food brought in must not pose a threat to anyone in the building with a food allergy. Therefore, **all** food brought to school for students must meet the wellness standards and be prepared, stored, and transported under sanitary conditions. Food needs to be in its original container with the nutritional label attached, as ingredients added may change over time. The school nurse will apply an orange sticker to any food that is brought in. An orange sticker indicates the food is safe to be consumed by all students, including those with food allergies.

Class parties should focus on celebrations that do not involve food. Ideas for suggested alternatives will be made available to staff and parents. The Director shall be responsible for ensuring the safety of all students and staff in this regard. Community groups using the Rhode Island School for the Deaf shall be informed of the Wellness Policy and strongly encouraged to adhere to it while on school property.

VIII. Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical Education

K-12 Physical Education shall be provided as required according to *RI General Law and the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs*. Students shall receive an average of 90 minutes/ week of physical education and approximately 2250 minutes of Health Education annually. Physical Education curricula should be aligned with the standards and performance indicators in the *Rhode Island Physical Education Framework*. Health Education curricula shall be aligned with the RI Health Education Standards.

All students with disabilities, special health care needs, and in alternative educational settings will receive physical education as prescribed by state regulation. Fifty percent of Physical Education instruction will be spent participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity, and 50 percent in learning how to live a physically healthy lifestyle. Instruction will be provided by certified, highly qualified teachers. Professional development will be provided as needed and appropriate to ensure the quality of instruction and safety of the students.

Physical Activity

Rhode Island School for the Deaf wants its students to grasp physical activity as part of their everyday lives. To provide opportunities for physical activity outside the Physical Education class, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf shall:

1. *Discourage inactivity longer than 2 hours.*
2. *Classroom health education will support physical education by reinforcing knowledge and self-management skills needed for a physically active lifestyle.*
3. *Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into subject areas other than physical education.*
4. *Classroom teachers will provide short activity breaks between lessons whenever possible and appropriate.*
5. *Before and/or after-school programs, including interscholastic activities, sports, classes, and clubs, will be offered.*

Outdoor play time will be provided daily for preschool children. Daily recess of 30 minutes, preferably outdoors unless the weather is below 40 degrees, shall be provided to all students in K-5. An appropriate and safe outdoor space will be provided. Recess shall not be taken away from students, unless for a highly significant circumstance, which shall be approved and documented by the Director.

IX. Health Education Classes

Since deaf and hard-of-hearing children often do not have easy access to health and personal safety information, K-12 students at the RI School for the Deaf shall participate in Health Education classes annually. These classes shall follow a curriculum that aligns with the RI Health Education Standards. Sex Education shall be taught by qualified personnel to middle and high school students in alignment with the RI Standards. Parents will be notified each year when sex education units of study will be taught, and the school will inform them which aspects of sex education topics are to be discussed at their child's grade level. Parents are welcome to view the curriculum. If desired, parents/ guardians have the opportunity to opt out in writing of this particular unit for their child.

X. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

Wellness Policy Communication

This policy, and updates as they occur, will be posted on the school website.

Wellness Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The Director and the Administration staff shall monitor the implementation of this policy. The Rhode Island School for the Deaf Wellness Committee will review the policy annually. It will

submit in writing any proposed changes to the Director and Board of Trustees. The RI School for the Deaf Wellness Committee shall meet twice/year, and the Chair of the Committee will report the Committee's progress and/or recommendations.

During the yearly review, the Wellness Committee will ascertain the following:

1. RI School for the Deaf is in compliance with the Wellness Policy.
2. The policy compares local school wellness policies.
3. Progress is being made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.
4. The assessment is made available to the public.

Wellness Policy Compliance

The Director shall be responsible for providing the necessary leadership to safeguard compliance with the Wellness policy. Review of the Wellness Policy will be part of staff orientations at the beginning of every school year. The Wellness Committee will support these orientations if requested.

Wellness Policy Reporting

The Wellness Committee Chair will report to the Director and the Board of Trustees on Wellness Policy implementation and evaluation annually.

The Director and/or Administrative staff shall develop procedures for the implementation of the policy.

XI. Legal References

1. USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/schoolmeals/nutrition-standards>
2. Dietary Guidelines for Americans:
<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>
3. RI Physical Education Framework:
<https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/2024-08/Rhode%20Island%20Physical%20Education%20Framework%20March%202003.pdf>
4. RI General Law (16-21-28), Health and Wellness Subcommittee
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-28.HTM>
5. General Law (16-22-4) and Sec3.5 of the Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs:
<http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/Statutes/title16/16-22/16-22-4.HTM>

6. RI General Law (16-21-7), School Health:
<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/Statutes/TITLE16/16-21/16-21-7.htm>
7. Public Law (111-296, Section 204) Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010:
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ296/html/PLAW-111publ296.htm>
8. Public Law (108-265, Section 204) Child Nutrition WIC Authorization Act:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/local-school-wellness-policies>
9. Rhode Island Nutrition Requirements (RINR):
<https://ride.ri.gov/child-nutrition>
10. 2010 Rhode Island Nutrition Guidelines for School Vending & A La Carte Foods:
<https://webserver.rilegislature.gov/BillText/BillText10/SenateText10/S2290.pdf>

Additional School-Based Wellness Policies

1. RI Safe School Act-Statewide Bullying Policy:
<https://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOE/6774.pdf>
2. RI General Law (16-21-SCHO), Rules and Regulations for School Health Programs:
https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Regulations/part/216-20-10-4?reg_id=11495

Rhode Island School for the Deaf Board of Trustees:

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