Burke County Public Schools

Wellness Policy

The Burke County Board of Education recognizes that student wellness is related to students’ well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board of Education also recognizes that the school plays a critical role in creating an environment that promotes student and staff wellness. The Board of Education is committed to providing a school environment, which will promote and protect a student’s health by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Part of the school learning experience should address health education, physical education, nutrition education and health promotion for students and staff.

Policy Rationale:

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and for lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for healthy weight and overall health, is linked to a reduced risk for many chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, asthma, heart disease and cancer. Nearly 40% of children in Georgia are overweight or obese, and physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits are the predominant causes of this trend.

Schools have the responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implemented school nutrition education and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students’ overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Optimal health is essential for students to achieve their full academic potential.

Employee wellness is also an integral part of a healthy school environment. Increased attendance and improved work energy and vigor are present among staff engaged in healthy eating practices and physical activity. Such behaviors serve as daily role models for healthy behaviors among students.
Goal:

All students in Burke County Public Schools should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and embrace regular physical activity as personal behaviors for a lifetime. All staff in Burke County Public Schools are encouraged and provided with opportunities to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Burke County Board of Education adopts this wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines and other school-based activities. This policy is designed to serve the needs and interests of all students and staff in our school district.

Therefore, it is the policy of Burke County Board of Education that students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members are engaged in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the policy as set forth herein.

Specific wellness goals for the school year, as well as the wellness policy can be found on the school nutrition program section of the district website or directly at: 
https://www.burke.k12.ga.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=323896&type=d&pREC_ID=732424

Classroom Food

Our school environment should support proper nutrition and promotion of healthy eating habits. To enhance the protection of our children from food borne illness and possible food allergens in foods, homemade food items as part of celebrations will not be accepted in the schools. In order to achieve this goal, the primary snacks for activities, parties, and celebrations should consist of pre-packaged fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products. Water, milk and 100% fruit juice should be offered as the primary beverages.

The following recommendations will help promote wellness for our students:

- Educate classroom teachers, students, and parents about nutritious snacks
- School sponsored celebrations with foods and beverages that do not meet the Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines will be discouraged. Fundraisers involving the sale of foods that do not meet guidelines, should be approved by the School Nutrition Department first.
- Feature healthy snack choices and minimize non-nutritious ones
- Food should not be used as a reward in the classroom. When using food as a reward, the use of nutritious choices is encouraged. Alternative, non-food choices such as stickers, pencils, erasers, extra credit opportunities, etc. should be used as
a first choice for rewarding students. Additional ideas can be found on the school nutrition website at https://www.burke.k12.ga.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=323896&type=d&pREC_ID=732424

- Encourage portion control as well as a variety of healthy snacks when having celebrations.

- Develop alternative rewards instead of foods with minimal nutritional value; i.e. cupcakes, candy, ice cream, pizza, etc. Contact your school wellness committee for ideas on appropriate rewards, free promotional giveaways, etc.

- Limit food as a reward or punishment for student behaviors, unless it is detailed in a student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

Competitive Food Sales

Competitive foods are those items sold to students during the school day that are not a part of the school nutrition program. To support the health and nutrition of all faculty, staff, and students of Burke County Public Schools, only competitive foods that are consistent with the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines will be served. The policy will also guide the Burke County Public Schools in the following way:

- All foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus, during the school day, should meet the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines established by the standards set forth in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The guidelines are as follows:

  - Food Items:
    - Any food sold in schools should: Be a whole grain rich grain product; or have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or be a combination food that contains at least ¼ C of fruit and/or vegetable; and the food should meet the nutrient standards for calories, sodium, sugar and fats.
    - Calorie limits:
      - Snack Items: less than or equal to 200 calories
      - Entrée Items: less than or equal to 350 calories
    - Sodium Limits
      - Snack Items: less than or equal to 200 mg
      - Entrée Items: less than or equal to 480 mg
Fat Limits: less than or equal to 35% of calories

- Saturated fat: less than 10% of calories
- Trans fat: zero grams

Sugar limit: less than or equal to 35% of weight from total sugars in foods

- Beverages: All Schools may sell:
  - Plain water (with or without carbonation)
  - Unflavored low fat milk
  - Unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
  - 100% fruit or vegetable juice, with or without carbonation and
  - 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners

Elementary Schools may sell up to 8 ounce portions, while middle and high schools may sell up to 12 ounce portions of milk and juice. There is no portion size limit on plain water.

High School Only: No more than 20 ounce portions of:

- Calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation)
- Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain <5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or less than or equal to 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces
- No more than 12 ounce portions of beverages with less than or equal to 40 calories per 8 fluid ounces, or less than or equal to 60 calories per 12 fluid ounces.

All foods purchased on the school campus (other than the cafeteria meals) during school hours will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School’s nutrition standards. We also encourage the use of foods that meet Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards when offered or brought in to school by teachers, parents, guardians, etc. including through:

1. Celebrations and parties: A list of healthy party ideas, non-food celebration ideas, and alternative food options can be found on the school nutrition website at
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents: A list of healthy snack alternatives that meet Smart Snack Nutrition Standards can be found on the school nutrition website at https://www.burke.k12.ga.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=323896&type=d&pREC_ID=732424 and will be available to all parents and teachers.

3. Rewards and incentives: Food and Beverage should not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment for any reason, including poor behavior or performance. A list of alternative ways to reward students can be found at https://www.burke.k12.ga.us/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=323896&type=d&pREC_ID=732424

- Staff members who purchase beverages out of the teacher vending machines or bring sugar-sweetened beverages from home should put the beverage in a cup during the school day and not consume it from the can/bottle in front of school children.
- Encourage schools that sell food during extracurricular activities to provide more nutritious alternative items for patrons.
- Schools participating in fundraising activities encourage the sale of nutritious items, such as fruits and bottled water, over foods of minimal nutritional value, such as sugar-sweetened beverages and doughnuts.

**Fundraisers**

- The sale of food items that meet nutrition requirements as stated in Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines at fundraisers are not limited in any way under the standards.

- All snacks sold in schools should meet the aforementioned nutritional requirements.

- The standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends, during class parties, and at off-campus fundraising events.

- **Exempted Fundraisers**
  - Per the State Board Rule 160-5-6-.01, the Board of Education for the Burke County school district will allow 30 fundraisers per school per school year not to exceed 3 days in length. Exempted fundraisers will not
occur 30 minutes prior until 30 minutes after the end of breakfast or lunch meal service.

○ All fundraisers that involve the sale of foods that are non-compliant with Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines should go through the School Nutrition Department for approval.

Employee Wellness

The Burke County Board of Education highly values the health and general well-being of each Burke County School Employee. Research indicates that there is a correlation between employee wellness, the cost of medical insurance premiums and the number of employee sick days used; therefore, the Burke County Board of Education supports the establishment of a wellness program to promote the physical fitness and mental well-being of all employees.

Activities and policies will support and promote personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Each school will develop, implement and monitor a multifaceted plan to foster staff health and wellness to include:

- Use of school facilities by employees for wellness program related activities, unless such activities interfere with the use of the facilities for educational purposes.
- Voluntary employee participation in wellness programs, except as otherwise directed by law or by separate Board policy procedures.
- The establishment of each school’s wellness program and implementation in a fiscally-responsible manner.
- The Board of Education will not be liable for any injuries or damages, which may result from an employee’s voluntary participation in any wellness program activity.
- A policy that whenever outside resources or persons are used for wellness activities, the principal and/or his designee at each school will be responsible for determining compensation levels of such instructors or resource persons or for the collection of any fees that may be required for the services of those persons or use of those resources.

Nutrition Education and Wellness Promotion

Children are an important audience for nutrition education because a healthy diet is essential for their normal growth and development, and because children are establishing food patterns they carry into adulthood. In order to develop lifelong healthy eating patterns, children need to be introduced to a variety of nutritious foods in a positive
manner. The overarching goal of nutrition education is to motivate participants to make healthy food choices. To this end, the Nutrition Education Program will:

- Provide students in grades Pre-k through 12 with nutrition education that meets the Georgia Performance Standards for health education that is interactive, teaches the skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens.

- Provide the same basic nutrition information at all levels of education, such as reading Nutrition Facts labels, understanding MyPlate, and understanding the basics about the different food groups, building on those basic ideas as progression is made through the grades and integrating instruction to the greatest extent possible into core curriculum areas of math, science, reading and language arts.

- Complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy and physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent in sedentary activities.

- Promote consistent nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom, cafeteria, home and community. Nutrition education materials will be displayed on the lunch room tables for students to read during lunch period. Staff will be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

- Nutrition facts labels will be displayed in the cafeteria so students and adults can learn to make healthy food choices each day. Other nutrition education materials will be displayed around the cafeterias during meal times. Nutrition information on menu items, as well as food allergens, is available at www.burke.k12.ga.us.

- Ensure nutrition education curriculum will be sensitive to differences in religious and ethnic dietary patterns.

- The entire school environment, from the classroom to the cafeteria, should be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student’s understanding of good nutrition and regular physical activity.

- Nutrition education is also made available to students and families through the Burke County Public Schools website. Nutrition cookbooks, newsletters and other useful links can be found to provide further education on leading a healthy lifestyle.
Food and Beverage Marketing

Research has shown that food marketing influences a child's eating behaviors, preferences, dietary intake, and overall health which can increase their risk for nutrition related comorbidities when exposed to marketing that promotes the consumption of low-nutrient foods. In order to keep our children healthy and reduce the negative influence food marketing has on their habits, it is our policy to promote only healthy options on any marketing material on campus. To meet this goal:

Marketing of any food or beverage on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition guidelines.

Marketing of low-nutrient foods and beverages on the school campus will be prohibited.

- Marketing of low-nutrient foods and beverages during school hours that do not meet the Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines include the use of logos and brand names on vending machines, books or curricula, school supplies, school structures and sports equipment, educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward, free samples, or coupons offered to students and families, etc.

The Marketing of healthy, fresh, and whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products will be encouraged.

Physical Activity

The Burke County Board of Education is committed to creating an environment that is conducive to students achieving the benefits of physical fitness and to enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle that becomes a lifelong habit. Given the alarming rate of obesity, all schools will offer planned sequential programs of physical fitness instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment. All activities during school hours will adhere to both Federal and State Rules and Regulations regarding physical education, recess and other forms of physical activity.

Mandate: Georgia Code 20-2-142 requires the State Board of Education to prescribe a course of study in health and physical education for all grade levels. Code 20-2-776 (2009) requires each local school system to provide at least the minimum instruction in physical education required by the State Board of Education in Code 20-2-142. State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.12 (2011) requires local boards to develop and implement an accurate comprehensive health and physical education program" that includes motor skills, physical fitness, and lifetime sports. The rule further requires 90 hours of contact instruction in physical education and health for students in grade K-5 and must be made available for students in grades 6-12. State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.47 (2002) requires high school students to complete one unit of Health and
Physical Education (out of 22 units) in order to graduate.

**Physical Fitness Assessment:** Code [20-2-777](2009) requires each local school district to conduct an annual fitness assessment program one time each school year for students in grades 1-12. The assessment should be conducted during a physical education course taught by a physical education instructor.

Guidelines will include:

- Physical activity that is encouraged and integrated across curricula throughout the school day. Physical activity will not only be encouraged during physical education class, but through classroom activities such as in-class fitness breaks and recess. Recess will be made available each day to elementary school students.
- Time allotted for physical activity is consistent with research, and national/state standards.
- Physical education includes the instruction of individual activities, as well as competitive and non-competitive team sports and other after school programs in order to encourage life-long physical activity. Interscholastic sports, community sports, and club activities are also encouraged.
- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education. Physical activity facilities on school grounds will be subject to all applicable state/federal guidelines.
- Physical and social environment will be provided that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students, including those who are not athletically-gifted. Staff members are encouraged to not deny physical activity to a student as discipline or punishment unless the safety of other students is in question.
- Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student’s lives. Schools will encourage families and community members to institute programs that support physical activity.

**Other School-Based Activities**

Children are our most valuable resource, and good health is essential to their academic success. Promoting wellness with all other school-based activities involves many different facets. A school environment that provides consistent wellness messages and is conducive to the health and well-being of students and staff members is essential to the Burke County Board of Education. Research indicates that healthy students are more prepared to learn, more likely to attend school and class, and better able to manage their health-related needs. To meet this goal:
● School surroundings are to be clean, safe and enjoyable for all students and staff.

● Local wellness policies are to be considered when planning all school activities to include, but not be limited to, dances, assemblies, field trips, and after-school programs.

● Open communication with and support from community/family is strongly encouraged regarding health updates, wellness policies and the overall well-being of the students.

● A school nurse, in collaboration with physical education teachers, dietitians, and school nutrition staff, will serve as a facilitator for the health of students and staff.

School Nutrition/School Meals

Given how hunger interferes with childhood growth, health and learning, it is the goal of the Burke County Board of Education Nutrition Program to provide school meals and snacks that are consistent over time which meet:

● USDA Dietary Guidelines

● Recommended Dietary Intakes

● Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines

● USDA nutrient standards for school meals

● Child Nutrition Act Requirements

● Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act Requirements

● All schools will provide breakfast through the U.S.D.A. School Breakfast Program and lunch through the U.S.D.A. National School Lunch Program. Other programs available to students throughout the year are the Summer Feeding Program, the after school at risk snack program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant Program (Elementary Schools only), and the Bright from the Start Supper Program under the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

● School meals will promote the consumption of nutrient-dense foods by:
  ○ Offering whole grains daily
  ○ Offering fresh fruits and vegetables daily
  ○ Limiting the amount of sodium in foods
  ○ Only offering 1% low-fat or nonfat flavored and unflavored milk
Using cooking methods that promote the consumption of healthier foods

- School menus will offer a variety of foods to appeal to different taste preferences. Occasional taste tests with students will allow for student input on new products.

- Menus and the nutrient analysis of menu items can be found on the county website: www.burke.k12.ga.us

- Substitutions will be made for documented special dietary needs.

- No meal or snack offered through the School Nutrition Program will be denied to a student as punishment.

- Students are encouraged to participate in the NSLP and SBP in order to receive daily healthy meals while on the school campus.

- Fast food meals in their original packaging including food wrappers, bags, boxes, and cups are prohibited from entering the school buildings. If a parent desires to bring a fast food meal for their child or if an employee desires to bring fast food as their meal, it should be re-wrapped in packaging that does not make it recognizable to be fast food.

- The school cafeterias will offer a clean, safe environment with appropriate supervision for students to eat lunch.

- Drinking water is available on all school campuses through safe, clean water fountains throughout each school building.

Each school is equipped with appropriate equipment and qualified child nutrition professionals, who receive yearly food service training, that provide students with full access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students in clean, safe, and pleasant settings with adequate time for students to eat.

**Implementation/Evaluation:**

To ensure that the students, faculty, and staff of Burke County Public Schools are afforded the opportunity to receive the benefits of this policy, the following means of implementation will include:

- The Administrative Coordinator will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

- In each school, the principal, assistant principal, or other school official designated will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the schools compliance to the Administrative Coordinator.
- The development of a wellness committee in each school that will oversee the implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy. The committee will encourage the participation from the following individuals: physical education teacher, school nurse, classroom teacher, school food personnel, administration, parents and other community members, a member of the Board of Education, students and any others striving to be involved with the school wellness environment.

- Triennial Progress Assessments: At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:
  
  - The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the District are in compliance with the wellness policy;
  - A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the District’s wellness policy.

Each school’s wellness committee will monitor and evaluate policy compliance to assess the state of adherence to the current policy. The information will be posted on the website and updated as evaluations are conducted. Any non-compliance issues will be addressed and an action plan will be created. The Board of Education will be updated as needed on policy compliance throughout the county.

The School Nutrition Program will post the triennial progress assessment on www.burke.k12.ga.us for public access.

- Members of the wellness committees at each school will be given an opportunity to provide feedback on any changes made to the wellness policy. Changes will be made as necessary with Board of Education approval. Community members will be updated through the board of education website as needed.
For Burke County Middle School:

Farm to School Committee: The Burke County Middle School will have a Farm to School Committee. Development and delegation of committee roles and responsibilities including, but not limited to:

1. School Gardens:
   a. Maintenance of garden during school and non-school months; participation guidelines for garden; scheduling of garden space use; purpose of garden; and allocation of garden produce.
   b. Explanation of how the school garden program fits the standards-based curriculum and school-wide guidelines
   c. Integrate and encourage usage of garden space by multiple subjects
   d. Funding sources for maintenance of the garden
   e. Build community awareness, support and volunteer base

The Burke County Public Schools Wellness Policy will be made available for public viewing on the Burke County Public School website (www.burke.k12.ga.us).