

Support a healthy food environment in all aspects of the school day.

School Meals

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs provide nutritious meals to all children enrolled in participating schools. These meals are provided by your school district's financially self-supported Food Service Department and must meet the nutritional standards set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

All school food service programs are evaluated by a state agency to ensure that they meet specific nutritional requirements. Lunch must provide 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for key nutrients, breakfast must provide 1/4 of the RDA, and all meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Schools are working to further improve the nutritional content of school meals by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

Contact your school district's food service director for more information on the meals served in your district.



Competitive Foods

In addition to the nutrition guidelines for school meals set by the federal government, **Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids (Mass AFHK)** has developed standards to address “competitive foods,” those foods and beverages sold outside the reimbursable school meals programs. These may include a la carte snacks and beverages available in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraising activities, and classroom parties.

The standards are used in compiling the A-List, a comprehensive list of “A-acceptable” products.

The John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition (JSI) manages the A-List by evaluating new products against the Mass AFHK *Standards* to assure their “A-acceptability.”

The A-List and the Standards are available on the JSI website:

A-List:

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/
vending project/healthysnacks.htm](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending_project/healthysnacks.htm)

Standards:

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/
MA_Food_Standards.pdf](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/MA_Food_Standards.pdf)



Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a nationwide initiative dedicated to creating healthy school environments by advancing sound nutrition and physical activity practices in schools across the country. AFHK is composed of 51 state teams including Massachusetts AFHK. www.actionforhealthykids.org

Taking Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Policy Guide

for Teachers



www.actionforhealthykids.org

Why focus on wellness?

- Well-nourished children are more likely to attend school regularly and achieve academic success.
- Overweight children and teens are more likely to develop chronic diseases and become overweight adults.
- Wellness policies are intended to raise nutritional awareness, promote healthy eating habits, and encourage physical activity among members of the school community.

The School Wellness Policy

All school districts are required to have a wellness policy in place according to the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).

As part of the wellness policy, school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the policy should include food service directors, school nurses, physical educators, teachers, school administrators, local school committee members, parents, students, and members of the community.

Teachers Take Action for Healthy Kids

As a teacher, you can:

- Support the ongoing development and implementation of your school district's wellness policy.
- Be a positive role model for students, staff, and administrators by demonstrating healthy eating habits and being physically active. Consider starting a walking program for staff to promote the benefits of active living.
- Incorporate nutrition education into classroom lessons whenever possible.
- Avoid using food as an incentive or reward for good behavior or academic performance.
- Ensure that foods and beverages served during classroom celebrations are in compliance with the district wellness policy.
- Encourage parents to provide children with healthy foods and snacks.
- Encourage students to get regular exercise on a daily basis.



Additional Resources:

The *John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition* offers educational and training opportunities for teachers, nurses, food service personnel, and others working to improve the quality of the school nutrition environment. Their free lending library includes materials about nutrition education, food service management, and food safety.
www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/

New England Dairy & Food Council is a non-profit organization committed to providing scientifically sound nutrition information to physicians, registered dietitians, nurses, educators, consumers, and the media concerned about fostering a healthier society.
www.newenglanddairycouncil.org/

Planet Health is an inter-disciplinary curriculum focused on improving the health and well-being of 6th–8th grade students through nutrition and physical activity while building and reinforcing skills in language, arts, math, science, social studies, and physical education.
www.hsph.harvard.edu/prc/proj_planet.html

Bridges to Wellness: Connecting School Meals and Classroom Learning is a nutrition education resource for 5th–10th grade students created by the School Nutrition Foundation and the National Dairy Council. Free lesson plans include nutrition information as well as classroom and cafeteria activities.
www.schoolnutrition.org/CNF.aspx?id=2436

The Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) is a service provided by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) and administered by Project Bread to increase participation in both the School Breakfast and the Summer Food Service Programs. The website provides useful information and free promotional materials specific to these programs.
www.meals4kids.org