

# REGULATION

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Related Entries:** JPG  
**Responsible Office:** Chief Operating Officer  
Curriculum and Instructional Programs

### **Wellness: Physical and Nutritional Health**

#### **I. PURPOSE**

A school environment that promotes physical and nutritional health by teaching and modeling healthy behavior that fosters academic success. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will encourage students to take responsibility for their own health, to adopt healthy eating habits, and to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives by providing opportunities and instruction that support a healthy lifestyle.

#### **II. BACKGROUND**

Research indicates that many students are inactive and lack healthy eating habits. These factors have led to an increase in childhood obesity and can impact a student's ability to learn, grow, and thrive. Schools and families share the responsibility for guiding students toward healthy choices. Schools can create a healthy learning environment by providing nutrition education, physical education, and physical activity, as well as a variety of healthy food and beverage options. Parents can participate in, support, and encourage wellness activities and instruction.

#### **III. PROCEDURES**

##### **A. Nutrition Education**

Nutrition education will be part of the health education and physical education curriculum.

1. Nutrition education instruction will be provided in both the comprehensive health education program and the physical education program in the nutrition and fitness units.
  - a. In prekindergarten through Grade 5, it will be integrated into the health education and physical education programs.

- b. In Grades 6 through 8, it will be provided as part of the nine-week comprehensive health education curriculum, the Grade 7 science curriculum, the Family and Consumer Science curriculum, and the physical education curriculum.
- c. In high school, nutrition education will be provided within the required comprehensive health education course and required physical education courses. Numerous elective opportunities are also available for the advanced study of nutrition.

B. Physical Education

Teachers certified in physical education will teach movement skills and wellness behaviors emphasizing physical activity and good nutrition as cornerstones of living a healthy life.

- 1. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement.
- 2. The standards-based physical education curriculum, prekindergarten through Grade 12, will include:
  - a. Moderate to vigorous physical activity
  - b. Development of knowledge, motor skills, and positive attitudes
  - c. Promotion of physical activity and sports involvement
- 3. Physical education instruction will promote understanding of the components of fitness and healthy lifestyles. The curriculum will include the following:
  - a. Developmentally appropriate instruction in a variety of motor skills designed to enhance the physical, mental/emotional, and social development of every student
  - b. Fitness education and assessment to help students understand, improve, and/or maintain their physical well-being and develop their individual fitness plans
- 4. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

### C. Physical Activity

Physical activity will be encouraged for students, staff, and community members before and after school, and during the instructional day.

1. Movement activities or tasks will be integrated in all content areas as appropriate.
2. Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities.
3. Recess will be scheduled for kindergarten through Grade 5 prior to or after lunch, as scheduling permits.
4. Elementary, middle, and high schools should consider providing physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs, intramural programs, and/or interscholastic sports programs.
5. The Department of Transportation assesses and makes information available regarding safe routes for walking or biking to school. Regulation EEA-RA: *Student Transportation*, encourages students and families to model wellness by walking for exercise.

### D. Food and Nutrition Services

#### 1. School Meals

Meals will meet, at a minimum, the current nutritional standards as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Collaboration between the school meal program, nutrition education, and physical education will support healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

- a. Students will have access to a variety of appealing, quality, nutritious meals that promote growth and development, pleasure in healthy eating, and prevent school-day hunger and its consequent lack of attention to learning.
- b. Students may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on household economic factors or other information provided to the Division of Food and Nutrition Services. There will be no overt

identification of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals by the use of tokens or tickets or by any other means.

- c. Nutritional information pertaining to foods and beverages included in the reimbursable meals is available on the Division of Food and Nutrition Services Web site. The Web site also contains information specifically relating to food allergies.
- d. There will be coordination among the school meals program, nutrition education, physical education, the comprehensive school counseling program, other classroom instruction, and the community to support healthy eating and physical activity.
- e. The meals will offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, offer whole grain products, and serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk. Students will be involved in the taste testing of food and beverage products being considered as additions to the student meal menu. Additionally, the Division of Food and Nutrition Services will conduct focus groups with students and/or parents to obtain feedback on the school meals program.
- f. The cafeteria provides a setting where students can practice the healthy eating skills taught in nutrition education and physical education.
- g. Lunch cannot be scheduled prior to 10:00 a.m. Students will have access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals.

2. Other Foods and Beverages Available at School

Foods and beverages available to students outside of the school meals program should make a positive contribution to the students' diet and promote health. The Board of Education and the superintendent support nutritional standards for foods and beverages available to students at school from midnight until the end of the instructional day.

- a. It is encouraged that foods and beverages available to students during school-sponsored activities make a positive contribution to the students' diet and promote health. Staff should avoid using candy or other foods of minimal nutritional value as a classroom reward.

- b. Nutritional requirements apply to foods and beverages available to students through vending machines, school stores, fund-raising activities, athletic departments, and the a la carte cafeteria program from midnight until the end of the instructional day. The requirements are as follows:
- 1) Beverages are limited to 16 ounce containers, except for unflavored water. Only the following beverages may be sold:
    - (a) Water
    - (b) Low fat and non-fat unflavored or flavored milk
    - (c) Flavored, noncarbonated water
    - (d) 100% fruit juice
    - (e) Fruit beverages with a minimum of 50% fruit juice
    - (f) Sports drinks (isotonic beverages) to be available in the physical education area only
  - 2) Snacks that meet the following nutritional standards per single serving package, as stated on the package label, may be sold:
    - (a) 7 grams or less of fat (except for nuts and seeds)
    - (b) 2 grams or less of saturated fat
    - (c) 15 grams or less of sugars (except for fruits)
  - 3) Carbonated beverages, candy of any type, donuts, and honey buns are prohibited from sale to students regardless of their nutritional profile
- c. Marketing activities will promote healthful behaviors. Vending machine fronts will promote activity or consumption of approved beverages. When possible, pricing structures of food and beverage products will promote healthy options.

E. Communication

Literature regarding nutrition and fitness should be shared with students, parents, and the community, as appropriate.

1. Nutrition education and fitness literature will be provided during units of instruction in health education and physical education.
2. Nutrition-related information will be printed on the school menu that, in the elementary school, is sent home with the youngest student in the family, and also will be posted on the MCPS Web site.
3. Information regarding the school meals program, nutritional content of the planned meals, Summer Feeding Program, and resources in additional areas of interest will be communicated on the Division of Food and Nutrition Services Web site and through other methods of communication as appropriate.
4. The display and distribution of information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day is managed in accordance with Regulation CNA-RA: *Display and Distribution of Informational Materials and Announcements*. This supports parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

**Regulation History:** New Regulation, July 22, 2006.