



HOWARD UNIVERSITY MIDDLE SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE WELLNESS POLICIES ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES AND NUTRITION

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Congress established a requirement in the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004, that **all school districts with a federally funded school meal program draft a local school wellness policy**. Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (the Act) added Section 9A to the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1758b), *Local School Wellness Policy Implementation*. The provisions set forth in Section 204 expand upon the previous local wellness policy requirement from the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

The law requires that the policy must, at a minimum, (1) include goals for nutrition education, nutrition promotion, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness; (2) establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity; (3) provide assurance that those guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance applicable to school meals issued by the Secretary of Agriculture; (4) establish a plan for measuring the implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the wellness policy; (5) involve parents, students, teachers of physical education, school health professionals, and representatives of the school food authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in the development of the school wellness policy; and (6) inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the local wellness policy, including the extent to which schools are in compliance with the local wellness policy, the extent to which the school's local wellness policy compares to model local wellness policies, and to describe the progress made in attaining goals of the local wellness policy.

VISION

In keeping with the vision of Howard University, the Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science [(MS)²] will demonstrate its enduring commitment to educating youth by providing excellence and leadership in all of its programs, activities, and services to its students and the local and global communities. The safe school environment of (MS)² is a unique, collaborative learning community in which students, staff, parents, the University, and the surrounding community work together to promote high achievement and student success. Furthermore, adults in the community are

provided with a comprehensive approach to staff development. The involvement of parents and the community are integrated in all programs.

The Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, wellbeing and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, using the above requirements, the following is a policy of (MS)²:

- Participation in the National School Lunch Program, which includes the School Breakfast and the Snack Programs.
- All Students in grades 6-8 have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school meet the nutritional recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Students are given access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition of students.
- Students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members are involved in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS

NUTRITION EDUCATION:

(MS)² aims to teach, encourage and support healthy eating habits for all of its students.

Nutrition education is provided in the Physical Education and Health curriculum in all grade levels. Our physical student government is involved with the schools breakfast and lunch program, and a select committee of our student body meets on a regular basis with the school's lunch vendor and a school official to discuss and vote on menu selections.

HEALTH EDUCATION:

In addition to providing high quality education to the students, the health and safety of the students is also a top priority. (MS)² will provide health education that:

- includes an average of at least 15 minutes per week of health education for students in grades 6-8;
- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- integrated into other content areas such as math, science, language arts, and social sciences;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise); and
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and positively impacts students, families, and the overall health of the community;

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS:

Upon admission to (MS)² students are required to possess the required immunizations (in accordance with the requirement of the Department of Health of the District of Columbia):

- DPT (Diphtheria/Pertussis/Tetanus);
- OPV (Oran Polio Vaccine);
- MMR (Measles/Mumps/Rubella);
- RIb (Hemophilus Influenza Type b);
- HepB (Hepatitis B); and
- Varicella – if the child has not had chick pox.

The school provides information on where prospective students can receive free immunizations, including walk-in clinics. The Middle School ensures that all students have a comprehensive physical and dental examination each year, including a tuberculosis screening.

SAFETY:

Our students' safety is among the top priorities of the Middle School. All visitors to the Middle School are greeted by one of our School Safety Officers, and then are required to sign in at the front office. In addition to the security of the school, the entire Howard University campus, in which we are housed, is monitored by the University's private police force.

Additionally, with respect to safety and order, (MS)² uses the policies and procedures detailed in the DCPS School Reform Act. The two main goals of these policies and procedures are: (1) to ensure the safety of staff and students and (2) to create an environment conducive to learning. To ensure school safety, order, and student discipline, the school enforces a strict "zero tolerance" policy (e.g., misbehavior, drugs, weapons, violence, etc.). In addition, students are required to adhere to the Middle School dress code. Consequences for noncompliance with (MS)² policies are strictly enforced (i.e., in-school suspension, suspension from school, and/or expulsion).

PHYSICAL FITNESS:

The Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science acknowledges the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, (MS)² provides opportunities for students to participate in health-related fitness, and teaches basic elements of a healthy lifestyle. Students of all abilities learn and demonstrate specific movement skills. Suitably adapted physical activity is provided as part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) developed for students with disabilities that may restrict excessive exertion. Students are taught the role of sportsmanship and etiquette in games and dance. The end goal is for students to establish continuity of improved fitness, skill development and nutritional components.

Because (MS)² is committed to producing healthy students, our goal is to expose our students to an array of physical sports and activities. Research shows that students who participate in a variety of sports or activities, are more likely to stay active than those students who are limited. Additionally, we recognize the importance of physical activity as it relates to our students' mental and physical health. Physically active students tend to be healthier and more focused than students who are not active, thus reducing their chances of developing obesity and Type 2 diabetes, etc. The following are some of the activities our students participate in:

- Presidential Fitness Test – mile run, push-ups, curl-ups, v-stretch, etc.
- Football
- Basketball
- Soccer
- Track and Field
- Calisthenics

DAILY ROUTINES

Students in grades 6-8 receive at least 45 minutes of physical education per week, with at least 50% of class time devoted to actual physical activity. Consistency is important for students in academic as well as physical education. In order to produce positive results, one must be consistent. For that reason, a typical physical education schedule for (MS)² students consist of:

Warm-ups (5 – 10minutes)

Introduction of daily activity (5 minutes)

Performance of activity (25 – 30 minutes)

Cool Down and Reflection (5 – 7 minutes)

Students receive at least an additional 2 hours of physical activity per week with additional physical activities during freecess.

Additionally, (MS)² prohibits the requiring or withholding of physical activity as punishment.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Weather has an incalculable impact on physical activity. The weather can also determine what activities the student can participate in for the day. On days that are too hot, or cold, class will be held inside of Howard University's gymnasium. The gymnasium is an effective venue because it provides enough space for all activities.

EXTENDED DAY:

In addition to physical education class, (MS)² offers an extended-day program every afternoon. During this time students who prefer to be physically active can choose between intramural sports, dance, or kick for kids (karate)

The goal of extracurricular activities at (MS)² is to provide ample opportunities to engage all students' interests and keep such activities equitable. In keeping with the belief that all students' can achieve, there are various extracurricular activities available to all students at the Middle School.

1. Type of Sports and recreational activities the Middle School plans to offer students include:

- ❖ Swimming, tennis, basketball, track, aerobics, yoga, Tai Kwan Do, softball, volleyball, soccer, and other field sports. The University makes these and other activities available to children between the ages of 10-16 during its annual National Youth Sports Program run in the summer.

FOOD MARKETING IN SCHOOLS:

School-based marketing will be consistent with the nutrition education and health promotion. (MS)² will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotions of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards of the Healthy Schools Act of 2010 (HSA) and the USDA Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC) program. The promotion of healthy foods, include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

REWARDS:

The Howard University Middle School of Mathematics and Science will not use foods or beverages as rewards, incentives, or prizes for academic performances or good behavior, nor will we withhold foods or beverages as punishment.

CELEBRATIONS:

Each party will be limited to one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards of the HSA and HUSSC. (MS)² also limit celebrations that involve food to no more than one party per class per month.

SCHOOL MEALS:

Howard University Middle School ensures that all foods and beverages served to students through the National School Lunch, Breakfast, and Snack Programs: are appealing and attractive to students; are served in clean and pleasant settings; and meet, at minimum, the nutrition and serving requirements of the HSA and the HUSSC program at the Gold Award level.

(MS)² provides each student with at least 30 minutes to eat lunch, as well as, sufficient time to pass through the food service line.

(MS)² is in the process of developing a comprehensive outreach and promotion plan, which will eliminate the stigma of accepting “free lunch.”

As breakfast is considered to be the most important meal of the day, it is the policy of (MS)² to offer free breakfast to all students. It is also our goal to have over 40% grab and go or breakfast in the classroom available for students and always have breakfast available for any student who arrives late to school and provide healthy snacks during testing.

(MS)² ensures that all foods and beverages served or sold outside of the school meals programs through vending, a la carte lines, and fundraising meet the requirements of the HUSSC program at the Gold Award level for competitive foods.

(MS)² does not permit third parties to sell foods or beverages on school property from 90 minutes before the school day begins until 90 minutes after the school day ends.

Howard University Middle School does not allow vending machines on campus. Water is available to students by either the water fountains which are located on each floor, or the water cooler located in the cafeteria.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:

Howard University Middle School will seek to improve its environmental sustainability and engage in sustainable agriculture practices through:

- recycling – recycle bins are located on each floor;
- Contracting with food service vendors that utilize locally grown, locally processed and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices;
- using environmental friendly cleaning products when available; and
- incorporating recycling into the STEM class curriculum, with a focus on developing a compost site on campus, along with a recycling club.

GUIDELINES NOT LESS RESTRICTIVE:

Howard University Middle School will review this policy and ensure that the standards within are not less restrictive than those **set at the federal level** by the Secretary of Agriculture or state law.

WELLNESS POLICY REVIEW AND MONITORING:

Howard University Middle School (MS)² shall establish a steering committee (including parents, students, physical education teachers, and school administrators) for the development and review of its local wellness policy. This committee will ensure that (MS)² updates its local wellness policy at least every three years as required by the Healthy Schools Act. Additionally, (MS)² will disseminate copies of its local wellness policy through its parent-teacher organization, as well as, by posting it in the school's main office and on the school's website.

(MS)² shall use its steering committee for the monitoring and implementation of its local wellness policy. The committee will annually assess the implementation of the school's activities and ensure that they remain in compliance with its wellness policy and the Healthy Schools Act. The committee shall report on the school's compliance with its local wellness policy and make that report available to school staff, parents, students, and the public. The State Education Office will also monitor the status of Local Wellness Policies while conducting reviews and site visits for (MS)².