

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 School Nurses



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.

School Nurses Take Action for Healthy Kids

As a school nurse, you can:

- Actively participate in the ongoing development, implementation, and evaluation of your school district's wellness policy.
- Communicate the importance of a healthy lifestyle to parents, faculty, and students.
- Provide support for student wellness through health clinics and screenings.
- Communicate regularly with the district food service director about nutrition, student eating behaviors, food allergies, food safety, and other mutual concerns.
- Actively support the incorporation of nutrition education into classroom lessons.
- Collaborate with teachers, coaches, administrators, food service directors, and the PTO to ensure that only healthy snacks are available in the classroom, in vending machines, at school events, and in school stores.
- Promote quality physical education, support daily recess, and communicate the importance of eating breakfast.



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.newenglanddairyandfoodcouncil.org/

Wellness Solutions for Massachusetts is an online resource for school community members to establish, implement, and share effective wellness policies for their schools.
www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/wellness/index.html

Jump Up and Go is a multidimensional, collaborative program intended to help children, their families, and their communities become more physically active and develop lifelong healthy behaviors. Parents can download tools for implementing the program on the website. www.jumpupandgo.org

The American Dietetic Association's *eatright.org* website provides nutrition fact sheets on foods, nutrients, fad diets, weight management, and more.
www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/nutrition.html

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