

# 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](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

# Taking Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Policy Guide

for Students



[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://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.

## Students Take Action for Healthy Kids

### As a student, you can:

- Be a positive role model for other students by being physically active and eating fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, and low-fat dairy.
- Approach your school's cafeteria manager about healthy items that you would like to see on the menu. Once these items are introduced, encourage your friends to try them.
- Select nutritious food and beverage items from vending machines and stores in your school. Speak with your school's food service director and principal if healthy items are not available.
- Familiarize yourself with your school district's wellness policy. Attend wellness committee meetings if possible.
- Check out the Students Taking Charge toolkit to assess and improve your school's nutrition and health environment.  
[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/wellness/students.htm](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/wellness/students.htm)
- Look for ways to eat a healthy diet, increase your physical activity, limit your television and computer time, and have fun!



## Additional Resources:

United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *MyPyramid* website provides an interactive way for individuals to assess their current diet and physical activity as well as develop a personal eating plan.

[www.Mypyramid.gov](http://www.Mypyramid.gov)

USDA's *Eat Smart. Play Hard.* website provides games, activity sheets, recipes, comics, and more to highlight the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.

[www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids/)

The *Go Healthy Challenge* empowers kids to make their lives, schools, and communities healthier. Students can make a Go Healthy pledge online to eat better and exercise more.

[www.igohugo.org/](http://www.igohugo.org/)

The *Kidnetic.com* website provides fun activities and information about healthy eating and active living for children ages 9-12.

[www.kidnetic.com](http://www.kidnetic.com)

*Nutrition Explorations* is an interactive website that provides activities, contests, and general nutrition information.

[www.nutritionexplorations.org/kids/nutrition-main.asp](http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/kids/nutrition-main.asp)

*KidsWorld* provides basic nutrition information and activities for students.

[www.agr.state.nc.us/cyber/kidswrld/nutrition/index.htm](http://www.agr.state.nc.us/cyber/kidswrld/nutrition/index.htm)