



Hillcrest Educational Centers

WELLNESS POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF INTENT

In order to grow, learn, and thrive, children and adolescents need access to nutritious foods, frequent opportunities to be physically active, age appropriate wellness education and guidance. Additionally, and for a variety of reasons, many Hillcrest Educational Centers (HEC) students have been without the necessary guidance, support, and access to healthful food and activity, or even consistent health care. Consequently, these resources and conditions are even more important for Hillcrest students. HEC will help to optimize our student readiness thus affecting their ability to benefit from school as well as therapy by providing an overall atmosphere of wellness.

Hillcrest Educational Centers and the School Wellness Advisory Committee are committed to providing an environment that promotes, protects and nurtures our students' health, well-being, and ability to learn.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is hereby established as the policy of Hillcrest Educational Centers that:

1. HEC will engage students, teachers and staff, parents/guardians, food service professionals, health professionals, and other involved members of the Hillcrest community in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing agency-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
2. All Hillcrest students will have opportunities to promote and develop their physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing through staff support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
3. All foods and beverages served at Hillcrest, including those sold in vending machines at program sites, will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *USDA Regulations for School Meals, and Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards (105 CMR 225.000 PDF)*.
4. HEC will follow the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program regulations. These regulations prohibit foods of minimal nutritional value sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during breakfast and lunch periods.
5. HEC will follow the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards (105 CMR 225.000 PDF) regarding the sale of competitive foods (foods sold outside the school meal program).

6. Hillcrest's school programs will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating/good nutrition and physical activity. Additional programs may be provided outside of school when available.
7. Menus are developed with input from students, staff, culinary employees and the Director of Support Services. All menus are reviewed for nutritional requirements by a licensed nutritionist who suggests appropriate changes to menus when necessary.

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND WELLNESS PROMOTION

Hillcrest Educational Centers shall strive to provide nutrition education to all students. In addition, HEC will strive toward integrating nutritional information into a coordinated school health approach.

Nutrition education will include some of the following components:

1. Hillcrest will provide individualized nutrition counseling for students with nutritional or specific dietary concerns.
2. Students will receive nutrition education that fosters the adoption and maintenance of healthy eating behavior.
3. The students will experience an overall environment that is consistent with promoting the goal of healthy eating and wellness.
4. Healthy food messages will be reinforced in the dining halls through printed materials like posters and nutrition pamphlets and/or presentations.
5. Nutrition education is offered in the classroom and the residential living space, with coordination between the food service staff, teachers, educational support and residential staff.
6. Hillcrest staff will serve as role models and advocates for health and wellness.

III STANDARDS FOR USDA CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS AND SCHOOL MEALS

Supervision/Standards:

A qualified, certified and/or credentialed Director of Food Service shall have oversight of school meal programs and shall ensure that meals meet federal nutrition standards. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall meet or exceed federal regulations.

Food Safety/Training:

To minimize the risk of foodborne illness in schools, all food service, preparation, storage must comply with the most recent Federal Food Code and CMR 590.000. (Mass Food Code)

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points:

The Food Service Director shall provide food safety training for all food service employees. Food Service procedures in school shall comply with Hillcrest Educational Centers Allergy Policy.

Mealtimes and Scheduling:

Hillcrest Educational Centers shall operate under USDA regulations for school food programs (ie. National School Lunch Program).

Hillcrest Educational Centers will:

1. Provide students with access to a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students and USDA guidelines.
2. Acknowledge the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning.
3. Provide clean, safe and pleasant settings in which students may eat.
4. Afford a sufficient amount of time for students to eat.
5. Provide information on the nutritional content of meals for students and parents.

IV. NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR COMPETITIVE AND OTHER FOOD AND BEVERAGES (Outside of school meals program)

Hillcrest will follow:

- Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Public Schools
- Campus specific allergy list

This policy addresses all foods and beverages sold/provided to students, including those available outside of school meal programs on school grounds/and/or at school sponsored events.

These standards shall apply, but not be limited to, cafeteria à la carte sales, vending machines, school stores, concessions, athletic events and school day celebrations and fundraising activities. Fundraising activities will strive to support healthy eating and wellness. HEC campuses shall prohibit the use of vending machines for providing any snacks for students. Students and staff will have access to free, safe, and fresh drinking water throughout the school day.

The following criteria focus on decreasing fat and added sugar, increasing nutrient density, and moderating portion size. All food items sold on campus will follow the following guidelines:

Calories from total fat must be at or below 35%** , excluding nuts, seeds, and nut butters

Calories from saturated fat must be at or below 10%

Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight

Sodium will be no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes

Beverages

Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);

Not allowed: soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

These foods and beverages are required to meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. These standards set limits on calories, salt, sugar, and fat in foods and beverages and promotes snack foods that have whole grains, low fat dairy, fruits, vegetables or protein foods as their main ingredients.

Snacks served during the school day or after-school will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, student's nutritional needs, student's ages, and other considerations. HEC will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, residential staff and travel staff.

Elementary Grades.

The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary grade levels. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary levels should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle/Junior High and High School Grades. In middle/junior high and high school grade levels, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the above nutrition and portion size standards.

Celebrations. Whenever possible classes should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Foods and beverages served at school celebrations will meet or exceed the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary

Guidelines for Americans and USDA Regulations for School Meals, and Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards (105 CMR 225.000 PDF). Celebrations in schools should follow campus specific allergy list.

HEC will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to staff and teachers.

Fund raising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. HEC will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. HEC will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

School-sponsored Events Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

Food Rewards: Staff is strongly encouraged to utilize other forms of incentives or rewards that are not food-based. The use of food as an incentive or reward, if allowed, is required that the food awards be in alignment with the USDA Nutrition Standards.

Off-Campus Meals: Foods and/or beverages may have an effect on medication utilization in the body. Caffeinated Beverages, which may include: soda, coffee, iced tea are not allowed. HEC will provide guidelines for students and staff when purchasing meals off campus.

V. PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Schools are encouraged to:

- Create a school environment that is conducive to being physically active.
- Provide opportunities, encouragement and support for all students to be physically active on a regular basis to help develop skills, behaviors and confidence needed to be physically active for life.
- Use school facilities for additional physical activities/programs.

Physical Education:

Physical Education at Hillcrest Educational Centers shall adhere to the National Association For Sports and Physical Education (NAPSE) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) standards and be sequential, building skills and knowledge from year to year. The content of physical education classes shall include personal fitness and socially responsible behavior. Students in the district's physical education classes shall demonstrate competency through application of knowledge, skill and practice. Students will spend at least 80% of physical education time on moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Instructors who are licensed in Massachusetts will teach physical education. Hillcrest Educational Centers shall provide staff with adequate training in PE and ensure that staff receives professional development on a yearly basis.

- Elementary students should be given opportunities for physical activity during every school day through at least 20 minutes of daily recess periods, physical education

classes, walking programs and the integration of physical education/wellness into academic classes. All elementary school students shall have daily recess. Recess time in inclement weather will include physical activity and organized movement. Teachers will be provided with a structured plan for physical activity that can be utilized in the school building during inclement weather.

- Middle and high school students will be offered physical education classes during the school day, daily mandatory physical activities during residential hours and optional opportunities to participate in other physical activity clubs that meet the needs and interests of ALL students, including those who are not athletically gifted and those with special healthcare needs. Each campus shall communicate these offerings to students and families.
- Four years of physical education are offered at the high school level. Waivers for physical education classes are prohibited unless for medical exemptions.
- Recess and other physical activities shall not be taken away as a form of punishment. However, students may have physical activity restrictions, as documented on a Safety Level/Watch, based on a need to maintain safety.
- School environment should be conducive to students being physically active.
- The agency is encouraged to promote the use of school facilities outside of school hours for physical activity programs offered by community-based organizations.

Physical activity offered during the residential shifts:

1. Hillcrest will provide a structured Activity schedule in both the summer and winter months. The schedule will include specific activities by individual team and location and will offer both gym and outdoor options. On Monday- Friday first activity, which takes place at 4p.m., is a mandatory physical activity for all students. A second preferred activity will be offered at 7pm .On weekends there are two scheduled mandatory physical activities offered to all students.
2. Hillcrest will offer additional special events focused on physical activities such as Field Day, Olympic Day and campus wide sports competitions.
3. Hillcrest will offer and encourage clubs focused on physical activities such as Soccer Club, Basketball club, work out club, running club etc. These clubs will be organized and facilitated by direct care staff to take place during nonschool hours.
4. Hillcrest will offer and encourage Life Enrichment trips on a weekly basis. These are planned physical activities such as biking, canoeing, walking, hiking trips etc.

VI. STAFF WELLNESS

Hillcrest Educational Centers recognizes the connection between job performance, attendance, and the health and well being of every staff member. Staff members are encouraged to model and maintain a lifestyle of health and wellness. All Hillcrest staff are encouraged to participate in the many and varied opportunities presented to them for health information and lifestyle activities.

VII. SCHOOL WELLNESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Hillcrest Educational Center's School Wellness Advisory Committee shall include representatives from a wide range of school health related disciplines. The group should include: school health professionals, physical education teachers, food authority representatives, students, parents, additional school management or community members. To the maximum extent possible this committee shall reflect the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic composition of the community.

Role of the Advisory Committee

The SWAC will be established in the Hillcrest community and shall report to the CEO and Senior Management Team. The Committee will abide by the following standards:

- a. meet a minimum of four times annually, record attendance, and keep minutes of the meetings
- b. conduct a needs assessment of the agency and implement a plan with clear goals to address these needs
- c. evaluate progress in meeting the agency goals
- d. inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content and implementation of the local wellness policy
- e. serve as a resource to programs and activities that are related to this policy
- f. review and make recommendations for revisions as necessary
- g. prepare an annual report for the CEO and Senior Management Team.

This report shall include a review of the committee's membership and participation; a summary of the committee's activities; a list of measurable goals and objectives; an evaluation of the accomplishments, and action plan for the upcoming year.