

THORNTON SCHOOL DISTRICT WELLNESS POLICY

Preamble

Children need access to healthful food, opportunities to be physically active in order to thrive. Children also need to feel safe, nurtured, and respected in order to achieve overall well-being. Establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behavior patterns. Research shows a link between the health outcomes of young people and their academic success. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Thus, the Thornton School District is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating, physical activity and general well-being, as a foundation for learning.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Thornton School District that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the Thornton School District wellness policy.
- All students in grades K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S./My Plate Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015*, and the guidelines published under the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act 2010 including "Smart Snacks in School" (see Appendices) <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/dietary-guidelines>.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning. Thornton School District will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, Thornton School District will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program)
- Thornton Central School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.
- The school district will consider and promote additional health initiatives including, but not limited to: oral health (dental), mental health and wellness, a healthy environment, and hearing health/conservation.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

School Wellness Committee

The school district has a Wellness Committee consisting of a group of individuals representing the school, community, parents, students, representatives of the food service, school administrators, teachers, health professions, School Board and members of the public. This committee, in conjunction with School administrators, will periodically report to the public (via website, newsletters, School Board) regarding the content, implementation and progress of the Wellness Policy as needed. The building level administrator will ensure that the school complies with this policy.

The committee will collaborate with the school district to create, strengthen, develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise the school wellness policy. The committee will also serve as a resource for implementing those policies.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold & Served at Thornton Central School

These guidelines apply to situations where food and beverages are sold or served at Thornton Central School or served as part of the school lunch or breakfast program.

When food or beverages are served or sold in specific situations not outlined above, the principal, in consultation with the food service director or contracted service, shall offer guidelines for the food and beverages served or sold to the students at Thornton Central School.

General Guidelines:

Food and beverages sold or served at Thornton Central School should meet the standards for "Smart Snacks in School", "All foods sold in Schools" and "Snack in School – Beverage Options" guidelines (see Appendix)

In addition, foods and beverages at Thornton Central School should meet the following guidelines:

- 50% or more of what is served should be a variety of fruits and vegetables (i.e. for every non fruit or vegetable served, 1 serving of fruits and vegetables should also be served) with not more than 1 serving provided by 100% fruit juice (from "My Plate")
- should offer water as a beverage choice
- beverages containing caffeine should not be served
- should not include candy or gum when the nutrition content of food cannot be determined (i.e. is homemade)

When non nutrient dense foods are allowed, every effort should be made to provide foods that are consistent with the guidelines and uses the following principles from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

- Portion sizes should be kept small (i.e. smaller cookies, limited to 1 or 2 per student)
- Should be made with ½ whole grain products (i.e. serve whole grain breads and pasta, or bake with whole grain flours)
- Food should minimize fats, salt and sugars (i.e. choose healthful recipes, reduce sugar or salt in recipes, substitute applesauce for a portion of fat content while baking, use oils to reduce solid fats, choose baked or low sodium potato chips over regular)

School Meals:

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs should, in addition to meeting the “General Guidelines” above, also meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations; and adhere to the “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” and those published under the “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 School Meals Guidelines” which include but are not limited to:

- use a varied protein choice which includes legumes and fish in addition to meat options
- provide a choice of portion sizes, allowing students to eat the appropriate amount of calories for their individual needs
- offer fruit and vegetables daily¹, should offer a variety of fruits and vegetables (and 50% of what is served should be fruit and vegetables as per the “General Guidelines” above)
- offer a variety of milk options and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain²

In addition, school meals at Thornton Central School should adhere to the following guidelines:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- minimize the amount of processed food served to students;
- include, as much as possible, locally grown and produced products through participation in the “Farm to School” program or other initiatives

The Thornton School District should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students upon request. Such information could be made available on menus and on the school website.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn Thornton School District will:

- to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- should notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- should encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials or other means.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals³. We will promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

Summer Lunch Program. Got Lunch Program is not a school sponsored program, but does enlist Thornton Central School staff to promote and assist with the program. Got Lunch consists of 9 or 10 weeks during the summer and is available to any family who applies. It covers school aged children and involves delivery of 5 days' worth of food every week to the homes of those who apply. There is no income level requirement and students do not have to qualify for the Free and Reduced meals at school in order to receive Got Lunch meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling – Thornton Central School:

- should provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *i.e.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- should work towards scheduling lunch periods to follow recess periods;
- should provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. A qualified nutrition professional will administer the school meal program. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service programs, we may provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in school. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Snacks. When snacks are served during the school day or in school sponsored after-school program, they will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health by including nutrient dense foods that meet the "Smart Snacks in School" standards and meet the above Thornton Central School general guidelines. (For example, a serving of cheese or yogurt with a matching serving of fruits or vegetables and water as a beverage choice).

Events Taking Place at Meal Times. When food or beverages are being served at an event that is taking place at a typical meal time (*i.e.* sports awards dinner or PTO event taking place at lunch or dinner time) the food served should be a complete nutritionally balanced meal which meets the guidelines under the "School Meals" section.

Fundraising Activities. The school will encourage non-food fundraisers. For fundraisers that do involve foods, they should adhere to the "General Guidelines". Food fundraisers are discouraged during the school day, but if they do take place, they should take place after all school meals are served.

Celebrations. The following guidelines also apply to occasions that are celebratory in nature. They recognize that non nutrient dense foods (i.e. foods with high amounts of calories but little nutritional value such as ice cream, cupcakes, brownies, potato chips, etc.) have a cultural significance in celebrations but recognize that students, particularly those at young ages, are still learning self-control and that limiting these foods makes it easier for students to have a moderate and balanced intake of these foods, and helps foster similarly appropriate lifelong eating habits for these types of foods. These guidelines will apply to celebrations during and outside the school day.

Rewards. Thornton School District should discourage use of foods or beverages, especially candy, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Foods and Beverages sold individually. All foods and beverages served on the snack cart should meet "Smart Snacks" guidelines.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Thornton School District aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- 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, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The Thornton School District:

- should support parent's efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children;
- should send home nutrition information and post nutrition tips on school websites;
- should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

Staff Wellness. Thornton School District highly values the health and wellbeing of every staff member and will support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Dental Health. Spear Memorial Hospital's School Dental Program is committed to helping keep children's teeth healthy. Dental services are offered twice a year. A dental hygienist provides dental cleanings, sealants, and fluoride treatments in December, and fluoride treatments in May at Thornton Central School. Services are available regardless of a family's ability to pay. Permission forms for the program are sent home yearly. Dental health affects children's overall health and this important service helps to prevent dental problems and time missed from school due to dental issues.

School Health. School nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well-being, academic success, and lifelong achievement of students. The following are services provided by the school nurse at Thornton Central School:

- provides direct health care to all students and staff
- provides leadership for provision of health services
- provides screening and referrals for health concerns
- promotes a healthy and safe school environment
- serves in a leadership role for health policies and promotion
- serves as a liaison between school personnel, family, community, and health care providers

The Thornton Central School website does include a Nurse's page which provides information on Student Illnesses, Immunizations, Medications, Ticks and Lice, Childhood Obesity, Classroom Parties, Medicaid, Sports Physicals, 5210 Program and many more helpful links.

Hearing Conservation. "Noise-induced hearing loss", is usually caused by exposure to excessively loud sounds over time, and cannot be corrected. Noise-induced hearing loss can result from a one-time exposure to a very loud sound (at or above 120 decibels), blast, impulse, or by listening to loud sounds (at or above 85 decibels) over an extended period. Examples include construction noise, rock concerts, school dances and listening to music with ear buds at high volume, to name some. Recognizing that noise induced hearing loss is preventable, The Thornton Central School Community will:

- provide periodic hearing screening
- encourage listening to personal devices at a safe level
- minimize exposure to construction and maintenance noise during the school day as much as possible.
- collaborate with outside vendors to manage noise exposure at events such as school dances and assemblies.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing: Thornton Central School promotes healthy emotional development for all children. Spending every day in the company of youngsters who are profoundly affected by the world in which they live, educators develop a deep awareness of the importance of the positive influence of the school. Emotional and social development, including a sense of self-worth, is critical to the success of children in and outside the classroom. To that end, Thornton Central School staff collaborates with students, parents, area specialists and community members to influence student success by building awareness and promoting strategies to maintain and/or improve student mental health. This commitment centers on addressing the behavioral and emotional needs of all students in the educational process by focusing on students' social and emotional wellbeing.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-8. Students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive, at a minimum, the New Hampshire state physical education requirements. Physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher.

Daily Recess. Thornton Central School students (K-4) will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which Thornton Central School should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Students (5-8) will be offered opportunities throughout the year to have supervised recesses.

Extended Periods of Inactivity. Schools should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities After School. Thornton Central School will offer extracurricular physical activity programs. Thornton Central School will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Thornton Central School personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or consistently withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations as available with appropriate supervision. Prearranged use of these spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring and Policy Review. The principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent or designee.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school principal. In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The principal will meet with the Wellness Committee periodically and report information as needed to the committee. That report will be provided to the school board and available to the public.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to ensure compliance with the USDA requirements. This review will assess policy compliance, progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review the nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Wellness Wheel



Footnotes

¹ To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

³ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.

⁴ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

Appendices

Appendix 1. Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 – Summary of Proposed Rules, Link: www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act

Appendix 2. Smart Snacks in School – USDA Standards and Nutrition Standards for School Meals

Appendix 3. Smart Snacks in School - Beverage Options and Guidelines

Appendix 4. Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015, Website: www.chosemyplate.gov/

Appendix 5. Local School Wellness Policies: Overview and Action steps

Appendix 6. About Hearing Loss – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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