

Brass City Charter School Wellness Policy

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Brass City Charter School Wellness Policy

Preamble

Brass City Charter School (BCCS) is committed to the optimal development of every student. We believe that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines the School's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during school;
- BCCS promotes good nutrition, physical activity and other activities that promote student wellness;
- BCCS staff members are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- BCCS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

BCCS will convene a representative school wellness committee (hereto referred to as the SWC) that meets at least four times per year (February, May, August, November) to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The SWC membership will include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: school administrators; school nutrition director; physical education teacher; school health professionals; family engagement coordinator; school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); parents/caregivers; students; and the general public. To the extent possible, the SWC will reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Executive Director or designee(s) will convene the SWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is: Barbara Ruggiero, Executive Director.

Committee members

Name	Title / Relationship to the School	Email address	Role on Committee
Barbara Ruggiero, Ph.D.	Executive Director	bruggiero@brasscitycharter.org	Chair
Nancy Landona	Chief Operating Officer	nlandona@brasscitycharter.org	Designee
Matthew Capece	Spanish Teacher	mcapece@brasscitycharter.org	Member
Latisha Crutchfield	Student Support	lcrutchfield@brasscitycharter.org	Member
Carlos Flores	School Nutrition Director	cfoflores@gmail.com	Member
Danielle Gaynor	Director of Family Engagement	dgaynor@brasscitycharter.org	Member

Melissa Gibran	Classroom Teacher	mgibran@brasscitycharter.org	Member
Sofia LaBranche	School Nurse, Waterbury Public Health Dept.	slabranche@brasscitycharter.org	Member
Samantha Nilsson, LCSW	School Based Behavioral Health Clinician, Community Health Center	snilsson@brasscitycharter.org	Member
Dylan Riedl	Physical Education Teacher	driedl@brasscitycharter.org	Member

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

BCCS will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. The school will use the [WellSAT 3.0 Wellness School Assessment Tool](#) from the UConn Rudd Center to complete a school-level assessment based on the USDA final rule for local wellness policies and the latest research and best practices, create an action plan that fosters implementation and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.brasscitycharter.org

Recordkeeping

BCCS will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the SWC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;

- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

BCCS will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The school will make this information available via the BCCS website and/or school-wide communications. BCCS will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the school will also publicize the name and contact information of the school officials leading and coordinating the committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, BCCS will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which the school is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Barbara Ruggiero, Executive Director, bruggiero@brasscitycharter.org.

The SWC will monitor compliance with this wellness policy.

BCCS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The SWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as school priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

BCCS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The school will actively communicate ways in which representatives of SWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for the school. The school will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. BCCS will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The school will ensure to the extent possible that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and

accomplished through means similar to other ways that the school is communicating important school information with parents.

BCCS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The school will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

BCCS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The school applies annually to the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program. BCCS is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The District offers reimbursable school meals that meet state and [USDA Nutrition Standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of flavored milk in coolers.
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (cafeteria, classroom).
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development.
- Menus will be posted on the school website.
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a certified nutrition professional.
- The District child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- The District will implement the following Farm to School activities:
 - Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program to the extent possible;
 - School hosts field trips to local farms/orchards; and

- School utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/regional products.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards Trainings](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* ("school day" is defined in the glossary). BCCS will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water fountain and bottle filler will be available in the cafeteria.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry approved water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

BCCS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. Therefore, the sale of competitive foods or beverages by any means (including a la carte items, school store, or vending machines) is prohibited.

Any snacks offered/served to students before or after school will comply with Smart Snacks standards.

Celebrations and Rewards

No outside food is allowed, including for student birthday or holiday celebrations, with the exception of fresh fruit or vegetable trays.

All foods offered on the school campus will be provided by the school and will meet or exceed the [USDA Smart Snacks in Schools](#) nutrition standards.

BCCS will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of non-food alternative ways to reward children](#) and will encourage non-food rewards, including using physical activity (for example, extra recess) as a reward.

Fundraising

BCCS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

BCCS will encourage fundraisers promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).

Fundraisers will comply with [Smart Snacks fundraising guidelines](#).

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout classrooms, gymnasium, and cafeteria.

BCCS will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Hanging posters promoting healthy food and beverage choices.
- Displaying monthly menu in or near the main office.

Nutrition Education

BCCS will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. The school will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, and farm visits;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- Nutrition education will be offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum that meets state and national standards.
- Classroom teachers will provide opportunities for students to practice or rehearse the skills taught through the health education curricula.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

BCCS will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity

- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

BCCS is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Therefore, no brand-specific foods or beverages will be marketed or promoted to students on the BCCS campus, school equipment, beverage cups, educational materials, or in school media or publications unless allowed under Smart Snacks standards. In addition, we do not promote corporate-incentive programs or fundraising programs that encourage students and their families to sell, purchase, or consume products of a specific brand.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity during school (we do not offer before and after school activities); staff involvement; and family and community engagement. BCCS is committed to providing these opportunities. The school will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason, except that a maximum of 5 minutes may be withheld from recess only on a day when a student has physical education class. BCCS will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students. Physical activity will also not be used as a punishment.

To the extent practicable, BCCS will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The school will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

BCCS will provide all students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided with equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. BCCS will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

No exemptions from, or substitutions for, physical education classes are permitted except for those related to religious or medical reasons, or disability.

All students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 45 minutes per week throughout the school year.

BCCS physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#)) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.

All physical education classes at BCCS are taught by licensed teachers who are certified or endorsed by the State of CT to teach physical education.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades. BCCS will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity

- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess (Elementary)

BCCS will offer at least **25 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature is dangerously cold, inclusive of wind chill factors; during storms with lightning or thunder; on days with dangerous heat index; or at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions.

If the school or district must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

BCCS recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. BCCS recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) daily physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods. BCCS will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

BCCS does not currently offer a regular menu of before and after school activities.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

BCCS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria and physical activity facilities. The school will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are

complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the SWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

BCCS will develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

BCCS houses a health clinic in partnership with Community Health Center. Families are encouraged to enroll and utilize the services of the clinic, which include providing physicals, immunizations, and primary care services as well as on-site testing for COVID, strep, etc. A mental health professional is also available to provide on-site services to BCCS students.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

BCCS will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, BCCS will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the district's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Free filtered water is available throughout the school day. Staff may eat school lunch at no cost.

The BCCS employee benefits package includes no cost access to Telemedicine for general medical care, mental health, and nutrition services, in addition to an Employee Assistance Program.

The school wellness committee is committed to staff wellness and health promotion. To that end, a staff wellness subcommittee has been formed to plan events, classes, etc. Suggestions for staff wellness activities will be solicited from all staff members.

Professional Learning

When feasible, BCCS will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help school staff understand the connections between

academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

The Physical Education teacher will be afforded annual opportunities to attend professional development particularly targeted to physical education.

Glossary:

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

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