

WINTER



# ASK THE DIETITIAN

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



## Q. What are school wellness policies?

**A.** The USDA requires all school districts participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs to develop local school wellness policies. These policies are written documents that guide a district's efforts to create healthier school environments. They promote the health of students and address the issue of childhood obesity.

As of the 2016-17 school year, districts were required to begin updating and revising their wellness policies for implementation in the 2017-18 school year.

## Q. What are some specific guidelines included in these policies?

**A.** All wellness plans contain guidelines to promote nutrition and physical activity within the school environment. While each policy is tailored to its school district's environment, many strategies are included, such as:

- Appointing a school wellness policy leader or leadership group to make certain all schools are following the plan
- Setting healthy policies around all school-based activities, including fundraisers, field days and classroom parties
- Having all food and drinks sold on school campus (inside and outside the cafeteria) meet federally mandated school meal and Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Sharing all strategies with the public

## Q. Who helps create the school wellness policies?

**A.** The process of creating and updating school wellness policies requires guidance from school administrators, the school board, school health professionals, health and physical education teachers, as well as input from the community, including parents, students and local key leaders.

## Q. How can I get involved with supporting my school's wellness policy?

**A.** There are many ways to support your school's wellness policy:

- Review the actual policy, which is made available to the public each year (check your school district's website)
- Reach out to your school wellness committee or principal on specific activities that require support
- Make your voice heard during the revision process, which is required to take place every three years



*Since everyone's health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about a diet and exercise plan that's right for you.*  
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