

The UCAP School

Wellness Policy

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Policy Statement

The UCAP School promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The UCAP School is committed to the optimal development of every student. The UCAP School supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health contributes to optimal student performance potential.

UCAP will maintain a focus on health equity and will work to ensure that all students and staff across the school have equitable access to health and wellness efforts. UCAP recognizes that the out-of-school time (OST) settings, such as academic enrichment programs (e.g., reading or math-focused programs), specialty programs (e.g., sports teams, STEM programs and arts enrichment programs) and multipurpose programs that provide an array of activities (e.g., 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Boys & Girls Clubs, recreation agencies and YMCAs), provide critical opportunities to teach and reinforce healthy habits. As such, UCAP will promote the use of the National After School Association Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards among all school-based OST program providers.

Nutrition Services

UCAP will:

- Provide breakfast, lunch, and after school snack programs that comply with the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs and the RI Nutrition Requirements.
- Offer a variety of foods and beverages that are appealing, healthy and attractive to students.
- Ensure that eating settings are clean and inviting.
- Provide adequate time to eat school meals, meaning that students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch.
- Convenient access to hand washing and/or hand sanitizing facilities before meals.
- Not withhold food as a punishment and use minimally food as a reward or incentive.
- Ensure that menus are created/reviewed by a well established food service company that employs a Registered Dietitian or another certified nutrition professional.
- Post weekly menus in our family newsletter.
- Ensure that students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Ensure that lunch follows the recess period whenever possible to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Promote participation in our child nutrition program.
- Encourage staff to model healthy eating behaviors.
- Implement farm-to-school and/or scratch cooking activities/meals by:
 - Incorporating local or regional foods into school meal programs.
 - Reinforcing messages about agriculture and nutrition throughout the learning environment.
 - Supporting school gardens and field trips to local farms.
 - Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following marketing and merchandising techniques:
 - Displaying whole fruit options in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Displaying daily fruit options in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - Giving creative or descriptive names to all available vegetable options.
 - Bundling daily vegetable options into all grab-and-go meals available to students.

- Training all staff members, especially those serving, to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- Conducting student surveys and taste testing opportunities and using them to inform menu development, dining space décor and promotional ideas.

Food Safety

- All foods available to students will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- In order to keep food safe, sharing of food by students is discouraged.
- Food is not allowed out of the cafeteria and eaten in other spaces, and only allowed in unusual circumstances and/or with permission from school administration.
- State and federal guidelines shall be implemented by the food service provider(s) in order to prevent food illness in schools. Emphasis on communicating proper food handling practices (e.g. for cooking, cooling, hygiene, etc.) for educators, administrators, parents, students and health practitioners is essential to health and wellness.
- Access to food service operations is limited to Food Service staff and personnel authorized by the Executive Director or designee.

Water

UCAP requires that:

- Free, safe and unflavored drinking water is available to students during the school day and during the extended school day (including during out-of-school time/and before and after school).
- Students are encouraged to bring and carry approved water bottles filled with only water before, during and after the school day across the school campus.
- All water sources and containers (e.g., drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations and water jets) will be maintained regularly to ensure adherence to health and safety standards

Physical Education and Physical Activity

The UCAP School will deliver a rigorous, sequential, developmentally appropriate 6th through 8th grade physical education curriculum for a mandated minimum of an average of 100 minutes a week (including Health), aligned with the Rhode Island Physical Education Framework, to develop physically educated students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

- Basic health and physical education instruction shall comply with Rhode Island standards. Recess and after-school activities shall not be defined as physical education.
- Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education classes and movement breaks.
- Schools encourage families to support their children’s participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
- Withholding physical activity as a disciplinary strategy in the classroom or in the school environment is strongly discouraged.

Health Education

Health education is an essential component of a student’s core educational program. The UCAP School will deliver a diligent, sequential, and differentiated 6th through 8th grade health curriculum aligned with the Rhode Island Health Education Framework and Rhode Island Department of Education Comprehensive Health Instructional Outcomes, resulting in students with the knowledge and skills to embrace healthy lifestyles. Instruction is integrated and is provided as a class period. Health education classes are integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.

Health Education will include instruction in the following content areas appropriate to grade and developmental level:

- Personal health

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. This is an equal opportunity provider.

- Social and emotional health & learning
- Injury prevention
- Nutrition
- Sexuality and family life
- Disease control and prevention
- Substance use and abuse prevention

Classroom Physical Activity

Classroom physical activity is defined as any physical activity done in the classroom. Classroom physical activity can take place at any time and occur in one or several brief periods of time during the school day. Classroom physical activity should be offered in addition to physical education and recess. The two primary approaches for classroom physical activity are:

- Physical activity integrated into planned academic instruction.
- Physical activity outside of planned academic instruction.

Classroom physical activity can benefit students by:

- Improving their concentration and ability to stay on-task in the classroom.
- Reducing disruptive behavior, such as fidgeting, in the classroom.
- Improving their motivation and engagement in the learning process.
- Helping to improve their academic performance (higher grades and test scores).
- Increasing their amount of daily physical activity

UCAP expects that:

- Classroom physical activity be incorporated into planning throughout the school day and the extended school day.
- Classroom physical activity be integrated into planned academic instruction to reinforce academic concepts and to reinforce skills learned in physical education.
- Barriers to classroom physical activity, such as lack of equipment or available space, are minimized.

Daily Recess

Recess is a scheduled time that provides an essential break from demanding cognitive tasks. Recess provides time to move, play, problem solve and socialize. Increased attention span and academic performance can result after recess, and recess helps children to learn social skills that may not be achieved in a structured classroom environment.

Recess provides student-selected opportunities to engage in physical activity and take a break from academic work during the school day. UCAP will, whenever possible, offer 20 or more minutes of recess on all days during the school year which will complement, not substitute for, physical education class and will:

- Provide schools and students with adequate spaces, facilities, equipment and supplies for recess.
- Ensure that spaces and facilities for recess meet or exceed recommended safety standards.
- Provide strategic inclusion and oversight of opportunities for students with special needs or disabilities to participate.
- Provide equipment where necessary to allow for inclusion of students with disabilities into activities

Before and After School Activities (Beyond U)

Physical activity before and after school can increase the amount of physical activity that students engage in. Physical activity before and after school includes walking or biking to and from school programs, physical activity clubs, intramural programs (sports organized by the school or community in which any child can participate), interscholastic sports (competitive sports between schools) and physical activity in before and after-school programs. Encouraging

students to be physically active before and after school helps them identify activities they enjoy and might engage in long term.

UCAP will offer opportunities for all students to participate in physical activity before and/or after the school day through a variety of methods including:

- Physical activity clubs
- Physical activity breaks in aftercare
- Intramurals or interscholastic sports

Social - Emotional Climate* (School Climate)

Social-emotional climate refers to the aspects of students' experience in school which impact their social-emotional development. The social-emotional climate can impact student engagement in school activities, relationships with other students, staff, family and the community as well as academic performance. A positive social-emotional school climate is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

UCAP is committed to creating a positive social-emotional climate during the school day and in OST. UCAP will promote a positive social-emotional climate by:

- Conducting and promoting participation in school climate surveys, sharing data with stakeholders and utilizing data to improve school climate.
- Establishing anti-bullying policies and identifying and implementing school-wide approaches to prevent and address harassment, bullying and cyber bullying.
- Establishing school safety and violence prevention policies and strategies.
- Connecting social and emotional learning standards and academic standards.
- Ensuring that school and school-based OST staff are promoting positive relationships between students and employees.
- Ensuring that school and school-based OST staff are trained in promoting the engagement of all students in school activities through diversity and inclusion practices.
- Training school and school-based OST staff on the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports* and minimizing exclusionary discipline practices such as suspensions and expulsions.
- Ensuring that school and school-based OST staff are explicitly teaching, modeling and reinforcing social-emotional learning* (SEL) competencies.
- Training school and school-based OST staff on incorporating trauma-sensitive* and trauma-informed* approaches into school policies and practices.
- Regularly assessing and reporting upon the district-and building-level implementation of these practices and providing appropriate resources for continuous improvement.

Counseling, Psychological and Social Services Counseling

Psychological and social services support the social, emotional and/or behavioral (SEB) needs of students and promote success in the learning process. These services include individual assessments, direct interventions and referrals to school and community support services, as well as systems-level approaches including resource mapping, school-community-family collaboration and ongoing participation in safety and crisis response efforts.

UCAP is committed to ensuring that the SEB needs of all students are met. UCAP will support students' SEB needs by:

- Ensuring that an evidenced-based process for identifying students with SEB needs is in place.
- Ensuring access by students to highly qualified, mental health professionals in the school setting (with appropriate student to professional ratios) and a referral pathway for connecting students to community-based providers as needed.
- Coordinating with school and community-based mental health providers to address students' SEB needs.
- Implementing evidence-based programs and practices which support a positive social-emotional climate.
- Implementing evidence-based interventions for students in need of additional SEB support.

- Ensuring that suicide prevention policies and programs are in place and that school and school-based OST staff are trained in identifying students at risk and referring them to appropriate services.
- Providing appropriate training to all school and school-based OST staff on meeting students SEB needs.
- Coordinating with caregivers and students to address students' SEB needs.
- Regularly assessing and reporting on the implementation of these practices and providing appropriate resources and training for continuous improvement.

Health Services *You can find UCAP's policy on Health Services [here](#).*

Employee Wellness

Schools are worksites as well as places of learning. Ensuring that school employees' physical, social-emotional and mental health needs are met is pivotal to their well-being and to students' before academic success. Schools should create work environments that support healthy eating, physical activity and healthy behaviors, such as not using tobacco, and that address the social-emotional health of staff through explicit focus on stress management, maintaining positive relationships, teacher self-efficacy and support for purpose-driven work. Employee wellness programs and healthy work environments can decrease employee health insurance premiums and reduce employee absenteeism and turnover.

UCAP is committed to supporting the physical and mental health and well-being of all employees. UCAP will support employee health and well-being by:

- Engaging educators as stakeholders in all school improvement and planning processes.
- Disseminating physical and mental health information resources to school and school-based OST staff (e.g., pamphlets, flyers and posters).
- Conducting employee wellness/health (physical and mental) promotion activities at least once per year.
- Providing access (for free or at low-cost) to, and encouraging participation in and use of, physical and mental health programs/resources for:
 - Healthy eating and weight management
 - Physical activity
 - Stress management
 - Tobacco avoidance and cessation
 - Social-emotional health
 - Considering the disabilities of staff and ensuring access by all staff to health and wellness programs and resources that are offered
 - Promoting a positive workplace climate with a focus on diversity and inclusion practices designating a consistent and systemic approach for employee conflict resolution
 - Addressing space and break time for lactation/breastfeeding
 - Including employees in regularly assessing and reporting on the implementation of these practices and providing appropriate resources and training for continuous improvement, as appropriate.

Caregiver (Family) Engagement

A strong relationship between caregivers and school staff reinforces student health and academic development. School staff should make caregivers feel welcome, engage them in meaningful ways and make efforts to sustain their engagement. Caregivers should be actively involved in their child's learning and development.

UCAP is committed to encouraging caregiver engagement in school-level decision making and activities. UCAP will support caregiver engagement by:

- Ensuring that caregivers are actively recruited for inclusion on the LWP with attention to diversity of representation in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, etc.
- Ensuring that caregivers participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the LWP

- Making the LWP available to the public
- Ensuring that schools and school-based OST providers are providing opportunities for ongoing, sustained family engagement throughout the school year
- Ensuring that the school and school-based OST providers are providing opportunities for two-way communication with caregivers
- Supporting schools in aligning caregiver engagement activities with the needs of the community wellness objectives
- Ensuring that schools are using culturally responsive practices to engage caregivers
- Disseminating health information resources to caregivers (e.g., pamphlets, flyers and posters)
- Providing programs on physical activity, nutrition and other physical and mental health topics for caregivers and community members that are fully inclusive, culturally informed and address the need of the community, Whenever possible p
- Providing school-based volunteer opportunities for caregivers
- Including caregivers in regularly assessing and reporting on the implementation of these practices and providing appropriate resources and training for continuous improvement

Community Involvement

Community organizations (e.g., cultural and civic organizations, social service agencies, faith-based organizations, health clinics, colleges and universities and local businesses) can create partnerships with schools to offer resources, services and support to student learning and development as well as the physical and mental health of students and staff.

UCAP is committed to encouraging community involvement in school-level decision making and activities. UCAP will support community involvement by:

- Ensuring that community members are actively recruited for inclusion on the LWP with attention to diversity of representation in terms of race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, etc.
- Ensuring that community members participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the LWP
- Making the LWP available to the public
- Developing relationships with community organizations to identify community-based opportunities for student service-learning
- Developing joint or shared-use agreements for physical activity participation
- Including community members in regularly assessing and reporting on the implementation of these practices and providing appropriate resources and training for continuous improvement

Celebrations/Events

- Celebrations/events include, but are not limited to, birthdays, holidays, potluck dinners, etc. The UCAP School may choose to handle celebrations/events in a variety of ways including but not limited to:
 - Non-food celebrations are encouraged during the school day. However, The UCAP School allows celebrations involving food after school hours because we recognize that foods are an essential part of our families' diverse cultures. For events beyond the school day, our families are encouraged to contribute foods from their individual cultures so long as these foods are tree nut and peanut-free and are appropriate to the event.
 - Energy Drinks: Caffeinated energy drinks are strongly discouraged on school grounds and not provided during school events.
 - It is strongly encouraged that celebrations comply with the RI Nutrition Guidelines. Additionally, for equity purposes and due to sodium and sugar sensitivities, we ask that families refrain from packing snacks that are high in sugar and/or sodium.
 - The food service provider(s) will ensure food safety standards are met and to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

- Attention to student allergies is required, and teachers must collaborate with the School Nurse to ensure that allergy precautions are maintained.
- Opportunities for fundraising for the school by the students are not offered at The UCAP School. Therefore, there are no expectations outlined in this policy in terms of food.

Wellness Council

UCAP has established an ongoing School Wellness Committee* (SWC) that supports our Local Wellness Policy (LWP) implementation as well as LWP monitoring and reporting out to the larger community.

Accountability

UCAP will develop and annually update an action plan for the execution of this LWP. The plan will outline who is responsible for overseeing each component, as well as actions and a timeline for the completion of activities and goals. UCAP recommends that schools use the Healthy Schools Program Assessment or the School Health Index to complete an annual school-level health and wellness assessment. UCAP ensures that the LWP aligns with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Model Wellness Policy.

Wellness Policy Communication

The UCAP School communications should inform families, staff and the public each year about basic information on the Wellness Policy, including its content, updates to policy and implementation status and any events or activities related to wellness policy implementation, the revision process and/or the implementation and monitoring of the Wellness Policy. UCAP will document the impact of the LWP on behavioral and educational outcomes, (e.g., student and employee attendance or office discipline referrals) and will make this information available to the public via our school's website and through family newsletter.

Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements

The Executive Director will ensure that all UCAP personnel and all UCAP contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies.