

# WELLNESS

## Background

Wellness is a balanced state of active living, healthy eating, and positive mental health. Health and quality learning are interdependent. Educational research supports this connection and acknowledges the importance of creating and supporting healthy school communities as foundations for optimal learning. The Peace River School Division is committed to a Comprehensive School Health framework<sup>1</sup> that fosters lifelong wellness practices.

The Peace River School Division will apply Comprehensive School Health framework focusing on three (3) priority areas: active living, healthy eating, and positive mental health, while acknowledging the interconnectedness between the three.

### Active Living

Physically active school communities are more likely to engage in positive behaviour, academic success, and social inclusion. Providing opportunities to incorporate physical activity into daily school routines supports and encourages a healthy lifestyle.

### Healthy Eating

Nutrition plays a significant role in supporting optimal physical, intellectual and social health and well-being. Healthy school food environments support students and staff to make wise choices based on Canada's Food Guide

### Positive Mental Health

School communities that promote and support a strong sense of belonging and connection, as well as positive relationships and resiliency skills, create opportunities for all individuals to achieve greater academic success, rewarding relationships and exhibit positive social/emotional behaviours.

## Procedures

1. A division led Wellness Committee<sup>3</sup> will be developed to support the ongoing health and wellness of the school communities.
2. Each school community, with the support of the division Wellness Committee and school administration will identify a Wellness Champion<sup>2</sup> and School Health Team (staff, students, parents, community partners) to support the facilitation and implementation of a Comprehensive School Health framework. The Wellness Champion and School Health Team are encouraged to support:
  - 2.1. Teaching and learning opportunities for staff and student continuous learning.
  - 2.2. Partnerships and services that encourage working together with community stakeholders to promote health and use of local resources.

- 2.3. Policy to encourage the development and implementation of school passed guidelines to support active living, healthy eating, and positive mental health.
  - 2.4. Social and physical environments that support opportunities to build and foster positive connections between staff, students, families, and the community. Create and enhance the development of a healthy, safe environment.
3. School Administration, the Wellness Champion, and School Health Team are encouraged to:
- 3.1. Complete a school health assessment<sup>4</sup> as needed.
  - 3.2. Develop an annual action planning tool<sup>5</sup>.
  - 3.3. Create a **Student Wellness Action Team (S.W.A.T.)** or involve a current student leadership group in health and wellness initiatives.
  - 3.4. Support the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health and wellness initiatives and events based on identified priorities. Priorities may include active living, healthy eating and positive mental health.

#### 4. Active Living

School Administration, in conjunction with the Wellness Champion and School Health Team may:

- 4.1 Create a supportive culture where physical activity is embedded into the daily routine of the school community and values choice.
  - 4.1.1 Students will have opportunity to participate in at least 30 minutes/day of moderate to vigorous physical activity;
  - 4.1.2 Role model active living alongside students when feasible;
  - 4.1.3 Physical activity may not be cancelled or disrupted to accommodate increased academic classroom time; and
  - 4.1.4 Physical activity equipment will be available and accessible to the whole school community.
- 4.2 Incorporate movement breaks such as energizers, deep breathing exercises, and
- 4.3 Active Recess

#### 5 Healthy Eating

School Administration, in conjunction with the Wellness Champion and School Health Team may;

- 5.1 Utilize the Canada Food Guide and Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth

as the primary reference for the provision, promotion, sale and distribution of food in all school communities. Food from the “Choose Most Often” and “Choose Sometimes” categories are recommended, while foods from the “Choose Least Often” category should be limited. This Administrative Procedure does not impact lunches and/or snacks that students or staff members are bringing from home.

5.2 Ensure that strategies are in place to foster the knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote healthy eating. Strategies may include:

5.2.1 Promote and create opportunities for cross curricular nutrition education and an environment of positive food and beverage messaging;

5.2.2 Establish strong connections between nutrition education and foods available in the school community;

5.2.3 Schedule nutrition break(s) that provide time for eating and recreation; and

5.2.4 Encourage staff to limit the use of food as a reward.

5.3 All school communities will examine their nutrition practices and provide opportunities, support and encouragement for staff and students to consume healthy foods/beverages.

5.3.1 Explore healthy fundraising options based upon foods from the “Choose Most Often” category and limit foods from the “Choose Least Often” category;

5.3.2 Create an environment where healthy foods/beverages are available, affordable and promoted as the best choice;

5.3.3 Review options with food suppliers to maximize the nutritional value of the items;

5.3.4 Limit the number of items from the “Choose Least Often” category offered during special days;

5.3.5 Model healthy nutritional practices; and

5.3.6 Access expertise in the community through approaches including but not limited to partnerships, programs, referrals.

## 6. Positive Mental Health

School Administration, in conjunction with the Wellness Champion and School Health Team may:

6.1 Actively promote healthy relationships and positive connections between all members of the school community by:

6.1.1 Embedding education programs to support social emotional learning.

6.1.2 Creating positive learning environments where healthy relationships skills are role modeled and developed; and

6.1.3 Accessing resources and partnerships with community agencies and support networks to enhance opportunities for students and staff to develop skills and awareness to support healthy relationships.

- 6.2 Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health by providing education that increases mental health literacy.
- 6.3 Create on-going opportunities for student voice in decision making.

Adopted/Revised: JUN 2016/NOV 2019/SEP 2020

Reference: Section 11, 33, 52, 53, 55, 196, 197, 222 Education Act  
Public Health Act Food Handling Regulations, 2006  
Alberta Health and Wellness Food Retail and Food Services Code  
Alberta Nutrition Guideline for Children and Youth, 2008  
<sup>1</sup>CSH Approach  
<sup>2</sup>Wellness Champion Job Description  
<sup>3</sup>T of R  
<sup>4</sup>Assessment  
<sup>5</sup>Action Planning