

Guide for Writing School Policies to Support Physical Activity

BPS Wellness Champions



Contents

Introduction.....	3
General policy statements about physical activity	7
Classroom Movement Breaks	10
Meets Alliance for a Healthier Generation Criteria #707	
Recess & Structured Active Free Time	12
Meets Alliance for a Healthier Generation Criteria #701, 702, 707, 711	
Cross-Curricular Incorporation.....	19
Meets Alliance for a Healthier Generation Criteria #707	
Movement Promotion	22
Meets Alliance for a Healthier Generation Criteria #710, 711	
Other Physical Activity Opportunities at School.....	25
Meets Alliance for a Healthier Generation Criteria #707, 709, 712, 713	

Childhood Obesity—and How School Wellness Policies Can Help

Obesity in childhood has rapidly become a major health issue in the United States and throughout the world. Nearly 17% of children and adolescents in the U.S. are obese and another 15% are overweight. Obesity in childhood raises the risk of health problems like high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes during childhood. It also makes it more likely that a child will be obese when they grow up and continue to develop health problems.

What children eat and drink, how much they are physically active, and how much time they spend in front of a television, computer, video game, or other electronic screen play an important role in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. But physical activity, nutrition, and screen time are important for the health of *all* children, regardless of whether they struggle with extra weight. Very few children get enough physical activity each day to stay healthy and strong. Most children do not eat enough fruits, vegetables, or whole grains and consume too many sugary drinks, salty snacks, and sweets. The good news is that it is possible to help children get healthier by increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, and reducing their time spent watching TV or other electronic screens. Schools can play an important role by making sure to set aside time for physical activity each day for every child, that children have access to healthy foods and beverages, limiting their exposure to unhealthy foods and beverages, and limiting screen time.

The Boston Public Schools' Physical Education and Physical Activity Policy

In response to the need for all children to increase the amount of time they spend being physically active, the Boston Public Schools (BPS) are implementing a new policy to increase students' opportunities for physical activity at school. Schools will implement Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs (CSPAPs), an approach by which school districts and schools utilize all opportunities for school-based physical activity to develop physically educated students who participate in physical activity each day and develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime.

Both physical education (PE), which refers to a planned, sequential curriculum aligned with the BPS PE frameworks to teach students the knowledge and skills to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles, and physical activity (PA), which refers to any movement that requires energy expenditure above regular expenditure in a school day, are important aspects of a CSPAP. While PA cannot replace a PE curriculum, having daily PA supplements the activity that students get during PE and supports the goal of helping children and adolescents achieve a healthy lifestyle. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that students accumulate at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of physical activity per day while avoiding prolonged periods of inactivity. Recess or structured activity breaks, classroom breaks, movement promotion, and cross-curricular lessons provide opportunities for physical activity during the school day.

How Policies Facilitate Schools' Plans to Promote Physical Activity

Setting down written policies about physical activity is an important action step for schools as they implement their CSPAP. Written policies help make it absolutely clear to school administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and children what the school is supposed to do to support PE and PA. These policies should be placed in the school's Wellness Action Plan, part of the Whole School Improvement Plan. Other important places to put policies are in staff, parent/family, or general handbooks since these documents clearly lay out the school rules. Written policies can also be communicated to teachers, staff, and parents in training materials or newsletters. Incorporating policies into Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding (MOUs/MOAs) to ensure that schools and their partners have the appropriate equipment, time, and space to support healthy activities are also important. Schools often rely on spoken or informal, unwritten policies to determine practice. While these are important, formal, written policies have several advantages.

First, having a written policy ensures that *everyone* is aware of what is expected from them and what they can expect from the school, while spoken or informal policies may not ever get communicated to some people.

Second, having a written policy ensures that the school policies are very clear. A written policy makes it less likely that a teacher or parent will misunderstand the school's goals and practices.

Third, a written policy helps hold school staff, parents, and children accountable for following the school's rules, compared to an informal policy, which is more difficult to enforce.

Fourth, written policies help ensure that policies are sustainable over time. If an administrator or teacher with important knowledge about practices leaves the school, future school staff will know how to keep children healthy based on the written policies.

Purpose of This Guide and How to Use It

This guide provides suggestions for language supporting physical activity at your school that can be directly inserted your school's Wellness Action Plan as well as into parent or family handbooks, staff handbooks, general program handbooks, letters to families, staff training materials, MOAs/MOUs, or even schedules and menus. The suggested language in this guide lays out policies that help support your plan for fulfilling the new BPS physical activity policy as well as Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program Framework and Criteria for Developing a Healthier School Environment (Frameworks Criteria). Including these policies will help ensure that your school meets the policy and sticks with it in the future. The suggested policies address four main focus areas targeted by BPS:

- Classroom Movement Breaks
- Recess
- Movement Promotion
- Cross-Curricular Incorporation



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

These focus areas map on to different Frameworks Criteria for Student Wellness, which are noted where applicable. The main student wellness criteria that relate to physical activity policies are:

#701 At the elementary school level, school offers at least 20 minutes of recess daily

#702 At the elementary school level, classes participate in recess before lunch

#707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical education)

#710 School actively supports and promotes walking or bicycling to and from school

#711 School policies and practices support that physical activity is not used for or withheld as punishment for students

Supplementary language for additional policies that support physical activity, including policies for out of school (OST) time, community use, and parent communication, are also included at the end of this guide. When possible, several options have been provided for each policy area so that you can choose language that best fits your school.

Each piece of policy language is followed by an explanation of how practices would have to be changed to implement the policy. This is so that the implications of including each policy are very clear. While the language in this guide can, of course, be changed, it is important to carefully think about what your changes might mean for practice. For example, a policy that states that teachers *should* including activity breaks in the daily schedule is weaker than a policy stating that teachers *must* include them. Using “should” means that following the policy is encouraged, but not required, while using “must” means that the policy is a hard-and-fast rule. Most of the pieces of policy language in this guide have already been used with other Massachusetts schools, so we know they can work.

The Final Step....

Monitoring and Compliance: Making Sure Your Policies Work

After you have crafted your PA policy for your school, it’s important to make sure that you write in a policy that outlines your school’s commitment to making sure practices match with the policies. We recommend inserting the text below at the end of your final PA policy, which will commit your school to monitoring your school’s PA programs and allow your school to identify areas of success, areas that need improvement, and areas where policy may need to be strengthened or changed.

EXAMPLE MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE TEXT: The school principal will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district. The school will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school will review our physical activity and physical education policies and practices. The school will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

POLICY LANGUAGE FOR BPS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GOALS



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier
Generation's Healthy Schools Criteria #707*

GENERAL STATEMENTS ENSURING PROVISION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The following section provides examples for policy language that you can insert into parent, staff, or general handbooks to support physical activity throughout the school day.

Policy Writing Hints: A general statement declaring your school’s commitment to providing physical activity makes it clear to the school community that incorporating PA into the school day is a priority. It lets everyone know that the school is committed to providing students with PA opportunities. You can use a broad and simple statement, as in Example 1, or provide more specifics about the types of PA opportunities your school is committed to providing, as in Examples 2 and 3. A strong policy would also include the amount of PA time your school is committed to providing. The strongest policy would be to use the NASPE guideline of 60 accumulated minutes of PA per day for all students.

Example 1: Our school will provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable physical activity for all students, including those who are not athletically inclined.

Practice Implications: This very general statement simply requires that the school support some physical activity for students. It does not specify that types of activity will be provided. It does, however, ensure that the school must provide for activity opportunities for *all* students, thus making it the school’s responsibility to provide varying opportunities that will appeal to different students and be appropriate for different fitness levels and interests.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

Example 2: Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical education (PE) classes, daily recess periods, the integration of physical activity into the academic curriculum, classroom movement breaks, and other activities outside the classroom to promote movement, such as nature walks.

Practice Implications: This statement lays out the specifics of exactly what the school will do to provide physical activity for all students (although it does not provide information on how these actions will be implemented – see the categories below for more detailed language on policies that set out implementation for recess, etc.) It would require school administrators and teachers to examine schedules and staffing capacity to see how these activities can be provided. The policy as it stands implies that all students will get opportunities, but does not ensure that all students receive each type of activity—if feasible, the policy could be made stronger by stating “All students are given opportunities...” rather than only “Students are given opportunities...”

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

Example 3: 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;**
- **recess or structured activity breaks will be incorporated into the daily schedule for all students;**
- **opportunities for physical activity outside the classroom, such as active field trips and nature walks, will be incorporated into classroom plans;**
- **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.**

Practice Implications: As above, this statement lays out the specifics of exactly what the school will do to provide physical activity for all students (although it does not provide information on how these actions will be implemented – see the categories below for more detailed language on policies that set out implementation for recess, etc.). It has the extra benefit of an introductory sentence explaining why it is important to include PA outside of regular PE time. It would require school administrators and teachers to examine schedules and staffing capacity to see how these activities can be provided.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

CLASSROOM MOVEMENT BREAKS



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier Generation's
Healthy Schools Criteria #707*



*Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in
daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical
education)*

Classroom Movement Breaks:

Defined as “brief (~5-10 minutes) break during academic class time when students have the opportunity to move around and be physically active (i.e. Jammin' Minutes, Take 10).”



Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical education)

Policy Example 1: The school will not have 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, teachers will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Practice Implications: This statement commits the school to decreasing the time in which students are sedentary, and sets a general rule that teachers should break up sedentary time with active periods. However, this policy is very general, and does not specify *how* teachers should break up sedentary time or exactly how often they should do it. This policy should be combined with one of the suggested policies below, which helps clarify for teachers exactly what strategies they can use and when they should be used.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

Policy Example 2. [Use any of the statements below to outline the specific strategies your school will commit to in order to provide movement breaks to students, or use any combination of the strategies below]:

- **Each day the school will participate in fitness alarms. The office will ring the bell at 10 am and 2 pm and have all staff and students participate in physical activity.**
- **Start the school day with some type of physical activity. The entire school will participate in a morning warm-up from 9:15-9:30.**
- **When changing classrooms, teachers will lead students on a 5-10 minute guided walk through the building before arriving at the next class.**
- **Each teacher will incorporate brief physical activity breaks, one to two minutes, into each class period. Have students take turns leading various movement activities.**
- **Each classroom will have a “Fitness Captain;” this student will lead the classroom in an activity break every day. (can change the student weekly, monthly, etc.)**
- **Teachers will offer “brain break” opportunities, which involve some type of movement or allows students to be creative. Have students practice spelling or vocabulary words while walking around the room or play a game of charades based on a topic the class is studying.**

- The school will create and promote a video exercise (e.g., aerobic, dance, Zumba, etc.) library for classroom use.
- During the “homeroom” or “advisory” period in middle and high schools there will be 5-10 minute activity breaks every day where all children are encouraged to be active. .
- Teachers will incorporate “walk and talk” breaks—the class will walk while students discuss what they have learned during the class period.
- Faculty and staff will model enthusiasm for physical activity by participating in breaks with students and in school employee wellness opportunities.
- Physical activity is an important part of our day. To make sure children at our school get at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity each day, we schedule short activity breaks during class time at several points throughout the day.
- Three professional development sessions will be offered over the year to train and support teachers in offering innovative movement breaks in their classrooms.
- Substitute teachers, when receiving their assignment for the day, will be informed of our movement break policies and given appropriate instructions on how to lead the movement break/fitness alarm/morning warm-up, etc.
- Any assembly will begin with a movement break.
- Any test or exam will conclude with a 5-10 minute movement break.
- English teachers will lead 5-10 minute activity breaks on Mondays. Math teachers will lead 5-10 minute activity breaks on Tuesdays. Science teachers will lead 5-10 minute activity breaks on Wednesdays. History/Social Studies teachers will lead 5-10 minute activity breaks on Thursdays. Foreign Language/Specials (art/music/drama/etc.) teachers lead 5-10 minute activity breaks on Fridays.

Practice Implications: The statements above help make administrators, teachers, and school staff aware of the strategies the school is committed to using to incorporate PA into the school day. Whatever strategies your school chooses from above, make sure that those responsible for leading these activities are aware of the school’s commitment and are trained in how to employ these strategies.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Writing Hints: Setting policies for classroom movement breaks could involve a more general policy, as in Example 1, which holds the school responsible for providing break opportunities and limiting sedentary time, or describe the specific activities that will be employed to allow for movement breaks, as the types of activities listed in Example 2. Combining the two types of policies could also be helpful, so that there is both a general overall rule and clear rules for what will be done.

RECESS & STRUCTURED ACTIVE FREE TIME



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier Generation's
Healthy Schools Criteria #701, 702, 707, 71*



Criterion #701 At the elementary school level, school offers at least 20 minutes of recess daily



Criterion #702 At the elementary school level, classes participate in recess before lunch



Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical education)



Criterion #711 School policies and practices support that physical activity is not used for or withheld as punishment for students

Recess and structured active free time:

Defined as “a scheduled break from academic class time where movement may be promoted through teacher-led activities intended to make children move more or be more physically active.”

Policy Writing Hints: Setting up a strong policy to ensure that recess is provided to all students requires a few steps. The most important piece is a simple sentence stating that the school will provide recess to all students. Several other policy statements can help back this up, however, including statements that specify supervision and safety requirements, prohibit the use of the denial of recess as punishment, lay out what to do during inclement weather, and ensure that recess will not be cancelled to be used as catch-up time. A comprehensive policy statement for recess would include all of these elements.



Criterion #701 *At the elementary school level, school offers at least 20 minutes of recess daily*

Policy Example 1: The school will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess during which students will have opportunities for safe physical activity.

Practice Implications: This statement binds the school both to providing at least 20 minutes of supervised recess and to ensuring that students have access to physical activity opportunities during recess time. This will require administrators and teachers to evaluate the daily schedule and find time for recess periods of at least 20 minutes, if daily recess is not already provided. It will also require administrators to ensure that there is adequate space and equipment for children to play with during recess.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, schedules.

Policy Example 2: Recess provides opportunities for physical activity which helps students to stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. Our school will provide at least 20 minutes of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which we will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Practice Implications: As above, this statement also binds the school both to providing at least 20 minutes of supervised recess and to ensuring that students have access to physical activity opportunities during recess time. It also specifies that the school is required to provide adequate space and equipment and that recess should take place outdoors. This policy statement also begins with a statement justifying the inclusion of recess in the schedule, which may be useful for school communities that may not value recess as highly. This policy will require administrators and teachers to evaluate the daily schedule and find time for recess periods of at least 20 minutes, if daily recess is not already provided. It will also require administrators to ensure that there is adequate space and equipment for children to play with during recess. Lastly it will require training teachers and staff on how to encourage physical activity.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, schedules.

Policy Example 3: All students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to be active. Our school provides a range of activities, such as [insert activities here, e.g. tag, soccer, basketball, dance, and yoga], to make sure there is always an activity that appeals to each child.

Practice Implications: This statement also binds the school both to providing at least 20 minutes of supervised recess and to ensuring that students have access to physical activity opportunities during recess time. It also specifies that the school is required to provide adequate space and equipment and that recess should take place outdoors. This policy statement also lays out the school's commitment to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to be active during recess time, and specifies the school's strategy for involving children (through including several types of activities). This will require administrators and teachers to evaluate the daily schedule and find time for recess periods of at least 20 minutes, if daily recess is not already provided. It will also require administrators to ensure that there is adequate space and equipment for children to play with during recess. Lastly it will require training teachers and staff on how to involve all children in activity and will require an assessment of the school's capacity to offer various activities.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, schedules.

Policy Example 4. Except in cases of extreme weather (over 90 degrees F, under 20 degrees F, or during rain, sleet, or snow), every child at our school has an opportunity for 20 minutes of outdoor play every day. In the event of extreme weather, recess will be had indoors.

Practice Implications: This statement lays out very clear standards for when it is safe to have outdoor play, which helps ensure that children get enough outside time. Often, when going outside is left up to staff discretion, the decisions for when it is appropriate to play outdoors can be made inconsistently. To implement this policy, it would be necessary to train teachers and staff on this requirement and may be helpful to provide them with a handout reminding them of the rules for outdoor play. This also requires having a back-up plan for bad weather days to ensure that recess can still happen indoors.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, staff training materials.

Policy Example 5. In the event of inclement weather, every effort will be made to ensure that students are still allotted 20 minutes of active time indoors. The school’s (hallways, cafeteria, auditorium, gym, etc.) may be used for indoor recess.

Practice Implications: This statement requires that the school provide space for indoor recess when outdoor play is not feasible due to weather. It will require that administrators ensure that indoor space is available.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, MOA/MOU, staff training materials.

Policy Example 6: Recess time will not be cancelled for instructional make-up time. All students will receive 20 minutes of recess time every day.

Practice Implications: If your school already has a recess policy, this can take it to the next level. This statement requires that teachers will not sacrifice recess time for instructional time under any circumstances. This will require training of teachers and identification of other times in the schedule which can be used for instructional make-up time.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, staff training materials.

Policy Example 7. Substitute teachers, when receiving their assignment for the day, will be informed of our recess and physical activity policies.

Practice Implications: This statement requires that the school have a procedure in place to alert substitute teachers to the school’s commitment to recess and PA, so that recess or other PA time is not missed due to a substitute teacher’s unawareness.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, staff training materials.



Criterion #702 At the elementary school level, classes participate in recess before lunch

Note: You could add “before lunch” to any of the policies listed above for criterion #701.

Policy Example 1: All grades will have recess for 20 minutes before they are served lunch.

Practice Implications: This statement binds the school both to providing at least 20 minutes of supervised recess and to ensuring that students have lunch after recess. It doesn’t say that recess must happen immediately before lunch, so it still grants schools flexibility in scheduling. This will require administrators and teachers to evaluate the daily schedule and find time for morning or early afternoon recess periods of at least 20 minutes, if daily recess is not already provided. It will also require administrators to ensure that there is adequate space and equipment for children to play with during recess.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, schedules.



Criterion #711 School policies and practices support that physical activity is not used for or withheld as punishment for students

Policy Example 1. Teachers will not deny students recess as a means of punishment or to make up work unless under unusual circumstances and/or a student denial of recess is a consequence of circumstances during recess.

Practice Implications: This statement requires that teachers refrain from denying students recess as a means of punishment in most cases, but leaves open the option for teachers to use denial of recess as a behavioral consequence if a student does something during recess which requires their removal from recess or if there is an unusual circumstance of some kind. It is not as strong of a policy as Example 2, below. It will require teachers to be aware that recess denial should not be used and may require training in alternative forms of behavioral management.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, staff training materials.

Policy Example 2. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Practice Implications: This statement is stronger and broader than the statement in Example 1. It prohibits both the denial of physical activity and the forcing of physical activity as a behavioral consequence in all circumstances, and ensures that this technique cannot be used for any type of physical activity, not just during recess. It will require teachers to be aware that recess denial should not be used and may require training in alternative forms of behavioral management.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, staff training materials.

MIDDLE and HIGH SCHOOL APPROPRIATE



Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical education)

Policy Example 1: The gym and school yard will be supervised and available for student use during student free periods and lunch periods. The school will provide jump ropes, basketballs, and other equipment as possible.

Practice Implications: Even though middle and high schools might not offer traditional recess, many students still seek chances to be active outside of class. By opening the gym or school yard, and providing a few simple items of equipment, schools can greatly increase the number of minutes that students can be active during the school day. This is appealing in many schools where academic time is at a premium.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, schedules.

Additional Recess-Related Policies

All of the examples below could be used together for a comprehensive supervision and safety policy.

Policy Example 1: The school staff will maintain playground equipment through regular inspections and purchase appropriate equipment (e.g. jump ropes, playground balls) to encourage active outdoor play.

Practice Implications: This statement lays out the school's commitment to providing safe equipment that promotes active play. It will be necessary to ensure that appropriate funds are set aside to purchase or update equipment, and to consult with PE teachers to choose age-appropriate equipment.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 2: The school counselor will train our classroom assistants in conflict resolution techniques. The assistants will then be able to extend to the playground the conflict resolution skills the students learn in class.

Practice Implications: This statement straightforwardly requires that classroom assistants (or other appropriate staff) be trained in conflict resolution techniques to help keep recess time safe for all students, and that these techniques be consistent with those used in the classroom. It will require working with school counselors to map out a plan for training.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 3: Recess will be supervised by school staff in such a way as to encourage safe and active play. Adults who monitor recess are expected to intervene when a child's physical or emotional safety is at risk. It is expected that bullying or aggressive behavior will be prohibited and all safety rules will be enforced. Classroom and Physical Education teachers will teach students safe ways to use equipment and to play together.

Practice Implications: This statement also specifies the school's commitment to ensuring that recess is safe, and specifying adults' commitment to monitor behavior. This will also require administrators and teachers to evaluate whether training in intervention is necessary.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 4: Principals will seek to ensure professional development for staff involved in recess supervision in the following areas: promotion of active games and play, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, universal precautions, conflict management and bullying prevention.

Practice Implications: This statement binds the school to providing professional development for the safety techniques described above.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

CROSS-CURRICULAR INCORPORATION



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier
Generation's Healthy Schools Criteria #707*



*Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to
participate in daily physical activity during the school day
(excluding recess and physical education)*

Cross-curricular incorporation:

Defined as “A lesson on academic subject matter that involves movement or physical activity as part of learning (e.g. FitMath).”



Criterion #707 School provides opportunities for students to participate in daily physical activity during the school day (excluding recess and physical education)

Policy Example 1: Teachers will include a minimum of one lesson plan a week that integrates movement within core academic lessons, tying physical activity to learner objectives.

Practice Implications: The statement is specific, holding teachers to a standard of one lesson plan a week (you could increase this expectation in your policy, for example, three lessons a week, or one lesson daily). To implement this policy, teachers will need to be trained on the requirement and given strategies and suggestions on how to incorporate movement into their lessons.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 2: English teachers will be responsible for a physically active lesson on Mondays. Math teachers will be responsible for a physically active lesson on Tuesdays. Science teachers will be responsible for a physically active lesson on Wednesdays. History/Social Studies teachers will be responsible for a physically active lesson on Thursdays. Foreign Language/Specials (art/music/drama/etc.) teachers will be responsible for a physically active lesson on Fridays.

Practice Implications: The statement is specific, and useful because it divides up the work among teachers, but also integrates an active lesson into every day of the week. To implement this policy, teachers will need to be trained on the requirement and given strategies and suggestions on how to incorporate movement into their lessons. Subject-area team meetings will be useful places for teachers to collaborate.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 3: Three professional development sessions will be offered over the year to train and support teachers in integrating physical activity into their lesson plans.

Practice Implications: This statement could be added to either of the statements above to secure the school’s commitment to support teachers in fulfilling the school’s policies regarding cross-curricular incorporation.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

Policy Example 4: 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 as possible.**

Practice Implications: This policy is fairly broad. It states the school's commitment to integrating the lessons learned in PE with knowledge gained in other areas of the curriculum, and states that opportunities for PA will be incorporated into other lessons, but does not specify how this will be done. To follow this policy, it will be necessary for classroom and PE teachers to come together and plan how their curricula can complement one another at each grade level. It will also require training teachers on how PA can be incorporated into lessons, not just as a movement break but as a learning tool.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, curriculum guides.

Policy Example 5: In selecting new curricular materials, preference will be given to programs that provide active lessons as a regular, integrated component of their system.

Practice Implications: This policy is more likely to be relevant to principals and other administrators who make decisions about what materials to order. This policy establishes the expectation that when picking new materials, weight should be given to those that offer physical activity already written into the curriculum (e.g., FitMath).

Where to put this language: Staff handbooks, staff training materials, curriculum guides.

MOVEMENT PROMOTION



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**

*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier Generation's
Healthy Schools Criteria #710, 711*



*Criterion #710 School actively supports and promotes walking or bicycling
to and from school*



*Criterion #711 School policies and practices support that physical activity
is not used for or withheld as punishment for students*

Movement Promotion:

Defined as “activity outside of the classroom during the school day that promotes movement or physical activity, such as a nature walk or field trip including physical activities.”

Policy Writing Hints: Movement promotion can be supported using policies that set up safe routes to school or declare that opportunities for PA will be provided outside of classes.



Criterion #710 School actively supports and promotes walking or bicycling to and from school

Policy Example 1: The school will participate in monthly Walk/Ride Day events. On these days in particular, students will be encouraged to arrive at school via walking or cycling.

Practice Implications: This statement holds the school accountable for participating in a specific promotion activity and supporting active transport to and from school using specific strategies. This policy requires the school to work with the district and other relevant transportation authorities to ensure safe routes to school and to provide students and families with informational resources.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 2: The school will encourage students to commute to and from school in an “active” manner consistent with the school district’s transportation policy. The school will also seek to support walking and biking by providing resources, including:

- **Information about safe walking and biking to school**
- **Safe bike parking at school**
- **Crossing guards at intersections close to school**
- **Walking maps for families and students**

Practice Implications: This statement holds the school accountable for supporting active transport to and from school using specific strategies. This policy requires the school to work with the district and other relevant transportation authorities to ensure safe routes to school and to provide students and families with informational resources.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 3: Our school supports opportunities for PA outside of recess, PE, and the classroom as well. We encourage students to commute to and from school in an “active” manner, organize weekly supervised walks around the neighborhood, and make every effort to ensure that field trips include opportunities for PA.

Practice Implications: This statement is less specific, but commits the school to a wider range of activities to support movement promotion. It will require administrators to support active transport (likely using the steps suggested above in Example 1), organize walks with school staff qualified and willing to take students on walks, and training teachers to identify PA opportunities when organizing field trips. Other strategies for movement promotion could be inserted into this policy statement.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.



Criterion #711 School policies and practices support that physical activity is not used for or withheld as punishment for students

Policy Example 1: After-school detention may not interfere with participation in after-school sports activities. Alternate arrangements for discipline must be arranged.

Practice Implications: This strict statement binds the school to supporting afterschool participation in athletic endeavors. This policy doesn't specify that the sport need to be school-sponsored. Schools will need to work together to develop other valid and respected consequences for inappropriate behavior during the school day.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials.

OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES



*Aligns with Alliance for a Healthier Generation's
Healthy Schools Criteria # 707, 709, 712, 713*



Criterion #712 School offers a range of competitive physical activity opportunities (intramural or interscholastic sports) for all grades before or after the school day.

Policy Example 1: Students will be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs, wherever and whenever possible. The school will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Practice Implications: This statement commits the school to providing after-school programs centered specifically around physical activity (as opposed to incorporating PA into standard after-school programs as in the statement above). It also commits the school to offering PA programs after school that can appeal to a diverse range of students, not just athletically inclined students. It will be necessary to evaluate your school's space and equipment for offering such programs as well as staffing availability.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 2: The school will encourage activity-promoting programs outside of the school day utilizing PTO's, clubs, community youth services, student council, and interscholastic sports. Recreational facilities will be handicap accessible for all students and community members.

Practice Implications: This statement is less strong, committing the school to working with community-provided programs and encouraging, but not necessarily ensuring, PA programs. It does commit the school to ensuring that PA facilities are accessible for all students and community members. It will require communication with community partners on what resources surrounding PA can be offered at the school.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.



Criterion #713 School offers a range of non-competitive physical activity opportunities aimed at engaging students in fun, recreational and life-long learning opportunities before or after the school day for all grades.

Policy Example 1: Our school's after-school program offers moderate to vigorous, structured, physical activity for every child 5 days a week for a minimum of 30 minutes. After-school staff make sure every child has the opportunity to get 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least three times each week. Every child in the program is given the opportunity to participate in physical activity each day. Children are encouraged, but not forced, to be active.

Practice Implications: This statement is a strong policy for afterschool programs that meets the Harvard School of Public Health's Prevention Research Center guidelines for physical activity in out-of-school programs, committing the program to providing 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity each day, 20 minutes of vigorous activity (i.e. activity that gets students sweating and out of breath) three times a week, and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to participate and are encouraged to do so. It will require working with after-school program staff to examine how schedules can (if necessary) be modified to work in these amounts of activity, how space and equipment can be made available, and how staff can be trained to support activity.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 2: Students will be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs, wherever and whenever possible. The school will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Practice Implications: This statement commits the school to providing after-school programs centered specifically around physical activity (as opposed to incorporating PA into standard after-school programs as in the statement above). It also commits the school to offering PA programs after school that can appeal to a diverse range of students, not just athletically inclined students. It will be necessary to evaluate your school's space and equipment for offering such programs as well as staffing availability.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 3: The school will encourage activity-promoting programs outside of the school day utilizing PTO's, clubs, community youth services, student council, and interscholastic sports. Recreational facilities will be handicap accessible for all students and community members.

Practice Implications: This statement is less strong, committing the school to working with community-provided programs and encouraging, but not necessarily ensuring, PA programs. It does commit the school to ensuring that PA facilities are accessible for all students and community members. It will require communication with community partners on what resources surrounding PA can be offered at the school.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.

Policy Example 4: School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Practice Implications: This statement ensures that the school will allow the community to use its PA facilities, which can help support PA outside of the school day and bring in community resources to support PA within the school. It will be necessary to examine space requirements and make appropriate agreements with community partners.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.



Criterion #709 School connects students and families with physical activity opportunities in the community

Policy Example 1: The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Practice Implications: This statement outlines specific steps that the school will need to take (e.g. sharing information through the school website or PE homework) to involve parents in promoting PA for students. It will require incorporating PA strategies into parent communication materials.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

Policy Example 2: Information will be provided to families to help them incorporate physical activity into their student’s lives.

Practice Implications: This statement is broader, simply requiring that the school provide some informational material at some point during the year about how parents can incorporate PA into students’ lives at home. Administrators should ensure that parents are given resources.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters.

Policy Example 3: School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

Practice Implications: This statement ensures that the school will allow the community to use its PA facilities, which can help support PA outside of the school day and bring in community resources to support PA within the school. It will be necessary to examine space requirements and make appropriate agreements with community partners.

Where to put this language: Parent handbooks, staff handbooks, school newsletters, staff training materials, MOU/MOAs.