



Wellness Policy Guidelines: A Dairy Check-up!

Milk and other dairy foods are nutrient powerhouses! They can play an important role in your school district's wellness policy to improve the health of your students.

Use this checklist to be sure your school district's wellness policy encourages consumption of these healthy foods and doesn't **unintentionally** restrict milk or dairy consumption.

Ensure that your policy promotes lowfat and fat free varieties, but offers a full range of milk choices.

Rationale:

If you limit student choices to varieties they do not drink at home, the risk is that they may not choose milk or may not drink the milk.

Sample wording:

Provide and promote flavored and unflavored lowfat and fat free milk, while offering a full range of milk choices.

Include guidelines that encourage cheese as a healthy snack.

Rationale:

Cheese is an excellent source of calcium and many other nutrients that growing kids need. Cheese also provides calcium for the teeth, and the American Dental Association recommends cheese as a tooth-safe snack. In addition, cheese is often better tolerated by students who are lactose sensitive. Treat cheese like nuts, seeds and peanut butter, as a nutrient-dense food.

Sample wording:

No limits set on fat content for cheese.

Make sure policies encourage flavored milk and yogurt.

Rationale:

Flavored milk and yogurt are a good decision, despite some added sugar. A study found that children who drank flavored milk got more calcium than those who didn't...but no more added sugars, and no more total fat. In addition, yogurt is often better tolerated by students who are lactose sensitive.

Sample wording:

No limits set on total sugars or added sugars for milk or yogurt.

Incorporate guidelines for portion size that encourage dairy consumption.

Rationale:

When it comes to dairy, kids aren't consuming enough. Most students consume only half of their recommended dairy foods each day. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that all Americans 9 years of age and older consume 3 cups of milk or an equivalent amount of yogurt or cheese each day. The availability of 10-16 ounce milk bottles allows students to reach this goal.

Sample wording:

No limit set on container size for milk. If limits are set, they are flexible enough to accommodate the choices of flavored milk and yogurt currently available.

For more information and science-based references, contact your local Dairy Council®.