

Administrative Procedure 128 Health and Wellness

Background

Educational research supports the connection between health and learning and acknowledges the school system's role in creating and supporting healthy school communities as foundations for optimal learning. East Central Catholic Schools (ECCS) values the benefits of healthy lifestyles and supports environments that promote healthy living choices.

ECCS believes a comprehensive approach to healthy school communities encompasses four wellness priorities: positive social environments, mental well-being, physical activity, and healthy eating.

Alberta Education recommends that the best way to impact student health behaviours is through a comprehensive school health (CSH) approach. CSH is an internationally recognized approach for supporting student learning while addressing school health in a planned, integrated and holistic manner. The [CSH](#) approach includes four pillars: partnerships and services, teaching and learning, physical and social environments and healthy school policy.

Definition

[Wellness](#) is a balanced state of emotion, intellectual, mental, physical, social and spiritual well-being that enables individuals to reach their full potential. Personal wellness occurs with commitment to a lifestyle choice based on healthy attitudes and actions. (Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education, Alberta Education).

All ECCS schools will implement this Administrative Procedure in accordance with the following procedures:

Procedures

- Administrators will:
 - Strive to create healthy learning environments for students and staff. A healthy school environment supports the wellness of all its members (e.g., students, staff (teachers, educational assistants, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, librarians, etc.), parents, administrators, community partners) and continuously strengthens its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working (Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities - Consensus Statement for Healthy School Communities, 2014).
 - Establish and maintain a caring, safe environment that develops the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to enable individual to make choices that foster nutritional, emotional, mental and physical well-being.
 - Work with staff to identify a Health Champion and support the development of a Wellness Team in the school.
- Staff (including Administrators) will:
 - Strive to create a healthy learning environment for their students.
 - Recognize the importance of students' emotional, social, intellectual and physical wellness to their success at school.
 - Acknowledge that healthy relationships, mental well-being, physical activity, and healthy eating play significant roles in children's overall health.
 - Acknowledge that students learn from role models at school, at home, and within the broader school community.

- Encourage students to think critically about the impact of their choices on their current and long-term health.
 - Support students to take an active role within their school community including participating on the Wellness Team.
 - Promote lifestyles that support healthy attitudes toward healthy relationships, mental well-being, physical activity and healthy eating.
 - Meet all provincial and curricular requirements with respect to daily physical activity (DPA), Physical Education, and Health / CALM 20.
 - Partner with community organizations when possible to deliver and support programs and services that contribute to healthy school environments.
- Health Champions will:
 - Be the school contact for the district.
 - Champion and encourage a wellness focus at their school.
 - Encourage the development of a wellness team at their school.
 - Collect information on health related resources to bring back to the wellness team.
 - Consult with site leadership and / or wellness team, identify the wellness needs of staff and work collaboratively to address ECCS priority areas for wellness.
 - Post and update the School Health Action.
- Student Leaders will:
 - Participate on the school wellness team.
 - Be the student voice for the school.
 - Identify needs and develop strategies to promote wellness in their school
- Wellness Team:
 - Each school will establish a Wellness Team (consisting of student leaders, staff, administration, parents, and community members) and will utilize the Comprehensive School Health approach to support the embedding ECCS priority areas (positive social environments, mental well-being, healthy eating, and physical activity) in their school community.
 - Create and maintain a School Health Action Plan

Priority Areas for East Central Catholic Schools:

1. Positive Social Environments
2. Mental Well-Being
3. Physical Activity
4. Healthy Eating

1. Positive Social Environment

A positive social environment ensures that every child (or youth) is “physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabled to learn. Healthy relationships are a pivotal component of a healthy school community and a positive social environment” (<https://everactive.org/>). Students who have a strong sense of self, belonging and who feel cared for at school are more likely to maximize their learning for greater academic success, have healthy relationships, and exhibit positive social-emotional behaviours and character traits.

The Joint Consortium for School Health states that the social environment is:

- the quality of the relationships among and between staff and students in the school
- the emotional well-being of students
- influenced by relationships with families and the wider community
- Supportive of the school community in making healthy choices by building competence, autonomy, and connectedness.

The following are characteristics of socially and emotionally well individuals:

- Better communicators
- Become effective leaders and self-advocators
- Develop into resilient individuals
- Caring, concerned, active and responsible members of their communities

Administrators will:

- a. Promote a culture that fosters wellbeing
- b. Develop trusting relationships between students and staff
- c. Develop students social and emotion skillsets
- d. Promote staff wellness

2. Mental Well-Being

Creating and supporting positive social, emotional and moral development among students and the adult role models in their lives. Mentally well individuals are able to realize their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities.

The following are characteristics of mentally well individuals:

- Understand, manage and express thoughts and emotions in constructive ways
- Feel connected, safe and valued
- Establish positive relationships and support networks
- Practice reflective thinking skills
- Demonstrate resiliency and coping skills
- Understand the benefits of mental well-being for individuals and for communities
- Make connections between their mental well-being, physical activity, healthy eating choices, and learning
- Learn and work productively

Administrators will:

- Actively develop the relationship between students' sense of belonging and their mental well-being.
- Include school-level procedures, which pertain to mental well-being, within the school's counselling plan.
- Encourage staff to access resources, services and community agencies as needed (e.g., Family School Liaison Workers, FCSS, RCMP, Alberta Health Services, VIBE (in some schools)).
- Ensure staff have access to professional learning opportunities to support and strengthen their skills and knowledge to support their mental wellness and the mental well-being of students in the classrooms.
- Reinforce that approved curricula is used to support character education and mental well-being through curricula (e.g., Dare to Care, Leader in Me, Restitution, Circle of Courage).

3. Physical Activity

The goal of physical activity is to develop students that are able to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person (PHE Canada, 2010). Students who are physically active are more likely to exhibit on-task behaviour, academic success, and social inclusion. Engagement in physical activities encourages students to make health-enhancing choices. Physically active individuals have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and opportunities to lead active lifestyles.

The following are characteristics of physically active individuals:

- Engage in physical movement and activity on a daily basis
- Vary the intensities and purposes of physical activity (e.g., conditioning, strengthening, enjoyment, flexibility) in accordance with Alberta Physical Activity Guidelines.
- Make positive choices to support the growth, development and care of their bodies
- Value and participate in lifelong physical activity
- Understand the benefits of physical activity for individuals and for communities
- Make connections between their physical activity, healthy eating choices, mental wellbeing, and learning.

Administrators will:

- Implement Alberta Education's Daily Physical Activity (DPA) initiative Kindergarten – Grade 9, recognizing that DPA is most effectively implemented through the timetabling of daily Physical Education.
- Meet the time allocations for quality Physical Education.
- Encourage students to engage in physical activity inside and outside of regular curriculum (e.g., community events, clubs, special events, teams, and intramurals) to support their development as healthy, active learners.
- Ensure staff have access to professional learning opportunities to support and strengthen their skills and knowledge to support physical activity in the school environment.

4. Healthy Eating

Healthy eating means eating a variety of foods from the [Canada Food Guide](#) to feel good and maintain your health ([Government of Canada](#)). Nutrition plays a significant role in student growth, development, physical and mental health and contributes to readiness to learn and academic achievement. A successful school-wide approach includes the entire school community and encourages all members to establish healthy eating habits.

Individuals committed to healthy eating have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and opportunities to make appropriate food and beverage choices. These individuals strive to:

- Support, through healthy food and beverage choices, the growth and development of their bodies and minds
- Think critically to discern the accuracy of messages about food and beverages
- Commit to healthy food and beverage choices in personal, school and community environments
- Make connections between their healthy eating choices, mental well-being, physical activity with learning, attendance and concentration.

Administrators will:

- Recognize that nutrition is fundamentally a parental decision first. We recognize that it is the parent responsibility to provide appropriate nutrition for their child and acknowledge parents as the first teacher of the child. ECCS does not regulate snacks and lunches brought to school for personal consumption, however staff and students are encouraged to make healthy food choices.
- Create an environment where healthy foods are available, affordable and promoted as the healthier choice.
- Ensure that food and beverages distributed, provided by or sold at the school for any school-related purpose (canteen, cafeteria, vending machines, breakfast programs, snack programs, lunch programs, rewards, fundraisers and special) should strive to meet the [Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth in Schools](#) (ANGCY).
- Develop strategies to ensure that staff, students, families, and community partners have received education/ information related to the importance of healthy eating choices and its impact on academic performance.
- Encourage beverages consumed by students during instructional time is water.
- Encourage staff to assist students in developing strategies that promote healthy eating choices for self and others.
- Reinforce that staff are role models for healthy food and beverage choices during instructional, extra-curricular, and co-curricular (e.g., field trip) time with students.
- Focus on teaching digital citizenship.

References:

[Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)
[Ever Active Schools](#)
[Framework for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Wellness Education](#)
[Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health](#)
[Physical and Health Education Canada](#)
[The Comprehensive School Health Approach](#)