

Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind



2022-2023

Wellness Plan

Rationale:

The link between the health of students and learning is well documented. If children are to be successful in school, they cannot be tired, hungry, sick, suffering from drug abuse, or worried that school is an unsafe environment in which they could become a victim of a violent act. It has become apparent that problems such as poor nutrition, lack of physical activity, substance abuse, depression, teen pregnancy, obesity, bullying, and more – can adversely affect not only a child’s health, but also his or her *ability to learn!* That is precisely why a coordinated approach to school health can make a difference! A coordinated approach to school health improves kids’ health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, schools, and communities working together. At its very core, a coordinated approach to school health is about keeping students healthy over time, reinforcing positive healthy behaviors throughout the school day, and making it clear that *good health and learning go hand in hand.*

Goal:

All students attending Mississippi Schools for Deaf and the Blind shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All staff at the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind are encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, the Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind adopts this school wellness plan with the following commitments to nutrition, physical activity, comprehensive health education, marketing, and implementation. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff, taking into consideration differences in culture.

Nutrition Environment and Services

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Offer school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Promote participation in school meal programs to students, families, and staff.
- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are properly qualified according to current professional standards (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2001).

- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (Mississippi Board of Education Policy, Code 2002).
- Include goals for nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity, and other school- based activities to promote student wellness.
- Implement Nutrition Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4011),
 - Healthy food and beverage choices.
 - Healthy food preparation.
 - Marketing of healthy food choices to students, staff and parents.
 - Food preparation ingredients and products.
 - Minimum/maximum time allotted for students and staff lunch and breakfast.
 - Availability of food items during the lunch and breakfast periods of the Child Nutrition Breakfast and Lunch Programs.
 - Methods to increase participation in the Child Nutrition School Breakfast and Lunch Programs.
- Establish guidelines in accordance with USDA Smart Snacks in Schools for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. (see Nutrition Environment and Services section of the *Tools That Work – Your Guide to Success for Building a Healthy School* Toolkit that is found on the Office of Healthy Schools website at <http://www.mdek12.org/OHS>).
- Establish guidelines in accordance with USDA Smart Snacks in Schools for the sale of food items for fundraising.
- Use Smart Snacks Resources to educate the school community about the importance of offering healthy snacks for students and staff members.
 - <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusin-g-smart-snacks>
 - Smart Snacks Product Calculator: The Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Product Calculator is an effective online instrument that has been determined by the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service to be accurate in assessing product compliance with the federal requirements for Smart Snacks in Schools. The calculator can be used for food and beverage products. <https://www.healthiergeneration.org>

Food Safe Schools

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Implement a food safety program based on HACCP principles for all school meals, as required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Mississippi Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs and ensure that the food service permit is current for the school site. HACCP Principles for K-12 schools can be downloaded at: <http://www.theicn.org>.
- Develop a food safety education plan for all staff and students, consistent with Fight

Bac® (www.fightbac.org) and other national standards for safe food handling at home and in school.

- Ensure that all staff has received information to support food safety on the school campus. Food Safety resources have been developed by the Office of Child Nutrition to assist with the training of school staff members. These resources which include a training power-point presentation, food Safety Post Test and Food Safety Post Test Answer Key can be found on the Office of Healthy Schools website at <http://www.mdek12.org/OHS>.
- All school personnel (school board members, administrators, teachers, school nurses, instructional and health services paraprofessionals, foodservice staff, custodians and facilities managers, and administrative support staff) will receive instructions to access the Wellness Policy that includes food safety policies and procedures and provides for relevant professional development.
- Provide adequate access to hand washing facilities and supplies whenever and wherever students, staff, and families prepare, handle, or consume food.
- The food safety assurance plan must address strategies that minimize risks for students and staff who have food allergies and intolerances.

Physical Education/Physical Activity

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Require fitness testing for high school students; during the year they acquire the ½ Carnegie unit in physical education as required for graduation by the Mississippi Healthy Students Act (State Board of Education Policy 4012).
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Instruction must be based on 2013-2014 Mississippi Physical Education Frameworks.
- Implement the requirements of the Mississippi Healthy Students Act of 2007 (Senate Bill 2369).
- Graduation requirements for 9th through 12th grade students shall include ½ Carnegie unit in physical education.
- Beginning with 9th graders in school year 2015-2016, provide instruction in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for students in grades 9- 12 in the school year they earn their ½ Carnegie Unit for physical education or health Education. MS Code 37-13-134 (Senate Bill 2185)
- Address concussions by adopting and implementing a policy for students in grades 7-12 who participate in activities sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA). This policy will include a concussion recognition course that has been endorsed by the Mississippi Department of Health. This course will provide information on the nature and risk of concussions for students participating in athletics. Also included in the policy, parents/guardians will be provided with a concussion policy before the start of regular school athletic season. (House Bill 48)

Links to resources to aid policy development and Office of Healthy Schools website www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/high_school.html#5
<http://www.misshsaa.com/GeneralInfo/SportsMedicine.aspx>
<http://www.mdek12.org/OHS>

STATE REQUIREMENTS MONITORED BY THE OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Health Education

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Provide ½ Carnegie unit of health education for graduation (2012 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Instruction must be based on the Mississippi Contemporary Health for grades 9-12 (2012 Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard 20, Appendix A).
- Implement the requirements of MS Code 37-13-171, which requires the development of a sex related education policy and instruction on medically accurate or evidenced based abstinence-plus curricula.
- Beginning with 9th graders in school year 2015-2016, provide instruction in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and use of Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for students in grades 9- 12 in the school year they earn their ½ Carnegie Unit for health education or physical education. MS Code 37-13-134 (Senate Bill 2185)
- Provide students with Body Mass Index (BMI- measurement of height, weight and blood pressure). Upon request, educational materials and support for student personal goals will be available.
- Create opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in before-and after-school physical activity programs.
- Establish physical activity opportunities for students and encourage participation in student-led fitness club as a support for healthy living.

Healthy School Environment

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Provide positive, consistent, and motivating messages about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting.
- Involve students in the local school health council for planning and marketing school health messages throughout the school.
- Create awareness of the link between the health of students and academic performance.
- Follow all pandemic protocols per recommendation from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MS Department of Health.

Health Services

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and Blind will:

- Ensure all school nurses are working under the guidelines of the 2013 *Mississippi School Nurse Procedures and Standards of Care*.
- Provide teachers and staff training regarding signs and symptoms of asthma. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37)
- Every child who has been diagnosed with asthma must have an asthma action plan on file in the school office.
- Know the district anaphylaxis policy. Providing training by a healthcare professional, preferably a school nurse, for the individuals that will be responsible for implementing the policy at the school site. (MS Code Sections 37-11-71 and 73-25-37).
- The school nurse should attend at least one MDE sponsored training each school year.
- Offer comprehensive health services for students in grades 11-12, through the employment of a school nurse.
- Optimize the provision of health services with a school nurse-to-student ratio of 1:750 for students in the general population.
- Collaborate with other school staff to provide health services as part of a Coordinated School Health Program.
- Work with students, parents, and local healthcare providers to effectively manage and treat chronic diseases.
- Promote healthy lifestyles through school and community events (Parent Network meetings, open houses, health fairs, teacher in-services, and other events).
- Schools may seek community support that provides auto-injector epinephrine to stock emergency medication needs.

Healthy School Environment

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Ensure that there are no pad locks or chains on exit doors; exits should never be obstructed (in accordance with Mississippi State Fire Code). Ensure that all exit signs are illuminated and clearly visible.
- Ensure that all chemicals are stored properly (in accordance with the Material Safety Data Sheet).
- Ensure all playground equipment meets federal guidelines for playground safety.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are inspected each year and properly tagged.
- Complete yearly maintenance of the heating and cooling system in your school; check coils, filters, belts, etc. in order to maintain safe operation and healthy air quality.
- Conduct at least one emergency evacuation drill per month.

- Eliminate the use of extension cords as a permanent source of electricity anywhere on a school campus.
- Comply with the applicable rules and regulations of the State Board of Education in the operation of its transportation program (in accordance with the Miss. Code Ann. § 37-41-53; State Board of Education Policies 7903, 7904, and 7909; and Accreditation Standard #35).
- Inspect all buses on a quarterly basis and ensure that they are well maintained and clean.
- Require that all bus drivers have a valid bus driver certificate and a commercial driver's license and operate the bus according to all specified safety procedures. Maintain a record of yearly motor vehicle reports on each bus driver and evidence that each driver has received two hours of in-service training per semester. (SB Policy 7903).
- Encourage arrival of all LEA buses at their designated school sites prior to the start of the instructional day.
- Conduct bus evacuation drills at least two times each year. (SB Policy 7904)
- Provide facilities that meet the criteria of: (Miss. Code Ann. §§ 37-7-301 (c) (d) (j); 37-11-5, 49 and 45-11-101; and Accreditation Standard #36).
- Provide facilities that are clean.
- Provide facilities that are safe.
- Provide proper signage that explains tobacco, weapons, and drugs are prohibited on the school campus and at school functions.
- Provide operational facilities that are equipped and functional to meet the instructional needs of students and staff in accordance with the Mississippi School Design Guidelines.
- Provide air conditioning in all classrooms, Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6(2) (2000).
- Comply with the requirements for Safe and Healthy Schools.
- Maintain a comprehensive School Crisis Management Plan on file that has been approved by the State Board of Education.
- Prohibit the possession of pistols, firearms or weapons by any person on school premises or at school functions.
- Prohibit students from possessing tobacco on any educational property, Criminal Code § 97- 32-9 (2000).
- Conduct annual sprinkler review and AHERA three-year inspections.

Counseling, Psychological and Social Services/Social and Emotional Climate

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Adhere to the details outlined in the Licensure Guidelines (436 or 451) when hiring guidance counselors and/or psychologists. The state does not have a policy specifically outlining the requirements for a school social worker. For licensure as a social worker in

the state of Mississippi, a candidate must: provide verification of a baccalaureate degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and scores a minimum of 70 on the ASWB basic exam.

- Abide by Mississippi Code 37-9-79 (Amended 2014) as the school provides for counseling and guidance for students.
- Hire school guidance counselors with a minimum of a master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, or in an emergency situation, an appropriate certification as determined by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development. MS Code 37-9-79 – (Amended 2014-Senate Bill 2423).
- Hire school counselors who agree to abide by the American School Counselor Association Code of Ethics.
- Continue partnership with New York Life as a Grief Reach School.
- Ensure that all school guidance counselors provide comprehensive counseling services such as:
 - Academic and personal/social counseling.
 - Student assessment and assessment counseling.
 - Career and educational counseling.
 - Individual and group counseling.
 - Crisis intervention and preventive counseling.
 - Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the State Department of Education shall require that local school districts conduct in-service training on suicide prevention education for all school district employees. Thereafter, only new employees are required to have training. The Mississippi Department of Mental Health will be responsible for developing the content of the training (HB 263).
 - Referrals to community agencies.
 - Educational consultations and collaborations with teachers, administrators, parents and community leaders.
 - Education and career placement services.
 - Follow-up counseling services.
 - Conflict resolution.
 - Professional school counselors must spend a minimum of eighty percent (80%) of their contractual time to the delivery of services to students as outlined by the American School Counselor Association.

Family Engagement and Community Involvement

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Invite parents and community members to participate in school health planning by serving on the local School Health Council.
- Invite family or community members to eat a meal at school.
- Invite family and community volunteers to lead physical activities for children, such as lunchtime walkathons, weekend games, after-school programs, cheerleading, karate, aerobics, yoga, etc.

- Update parents on school health successes through newsletters and/or email.
- Schedule school health fairs and invite parents as well as the community.

Employee Wellness

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Make as a requirement that all staff are aware of the Mississippi State and School Employees' Health Insurance Plan that has been enhanced to include *My Active Health*, a wellness and health promotion program designed to help individuals live a healthy lifestyle and increase their overall wellness benefit – <http://www.MyActiveHealth.com/Mississippi>
- Promote health and reduce risk factors through professional and staff development programs, providing information flyers and newsletters, introducing incentives for participating in healthy practices and activities, and offering an employee assistance program.
- Provide health promotion programs for school staff to include opportunities for physical activity, health screenings, nutrition education, weight management, smoking cessation, and stress reduction and management.
- Encourage Staff to use Fitness Center on the school site.
- Develop relationships with community health providers (e.g., local health departments, hospitals, neighborhood clinics, health professionals), recreational facilities, voluntary health organizations (e.g., American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association), and other community members who can provide resources for or support school employee wellness activities.
- Coordinate school employee wellness activities with student health-promotion activities.

Marketing a Healthy School Environment

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Provide positive, consistent, and motivating messages about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting.
- Involve students in the local school health council for planning and marketing school health messages throughout the school.
- Create awareness of the link between the health of students and academic performance.
- Follow all pandemic protocols per recommendation from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MS Department of Health.

Implementation

The Mississippi Schools for the Deaf and the Blind will:

- Follow the school wellness policy and update as needed.
- Designate one or more people to ensure that the school wellness policy is implemented as written.
- Establish and support a School Health Council (SHC) that addresses all aspects of a

coordinated school health program, including a school wellness policy (Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Section 37-13-134). The minimum meeting requirement is two per school year.

- Conduct a review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Prepare and submit a yearly report to the school board regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy, as necessary.

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