HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Policy Intent/Rationale:

The Chariho Regional School District promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifelong wellness behaviors. Schools contribute to the basic health status of children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition, mental health and physical activity. Improved health optimizes student performance. This policy aligns with the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* and adheres to all federal and state mandates relative to the wellness of students and staff.

The Chariho Regional School District will:

A. **Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors.**
B. **Support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance.**
C. **Provide frequent and regular opportunities for students to engage in physical activity.**
D. **Encourage the growth of a Health and Wellness Subcommittee of the School Committee.**

HEALTH AND WELLNESS SUBCOMMITTEE

In accord with R.I.G.L. 16-21-28, the Health and Wellness Subcommittee of the School Committee shall be chaired by a member of the School Committee. The Subcommittee shall encourage wide community involvement, including the involvement of students, families, school food service, Physical Education/Health teachers, school nurse, teachers, community and school-based health professionals, and business/community representatives. The Subcommittee shall meet at least quarterly. All meetings will be public and will be posted on the District website. An annual recruitment effort will take place (website, District notices/newsletters, personal outreach) to solicit new members. The goals of the Subcommittee include, but are not limited to (1) develop guidance to implement the Health and Wellness Policy, (2) evaluate the effectiveness of and recommend revisions to the Health and Wellness Policy, (3) serve as an educational resource to the school community, (4) make recommendations regarding the health and physical education curriculum, and (5) promote the overall wellness of the school community. The Health and Wellness Subcommittee shall report minutes of their meetings to the School Committee.

STUDENT NUTRITION

The School Breakfast/Lunch Programs:

The full-meal school breakfast and lunch programs will be offered in all schools and follow the USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs and Rhode Island Nutritional Requirements (RINR) as well as the principles of the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Applications for free and reduced meals will be sent home to all families and made available on the District website and all schools will utilize an electronic identification/payment POS system to allow students to participate in the school meal programs without any social stigma. The School Food Service Program provider will follow this policy and all applicable law in the development of menus for students and adults and when making determinations regarding food and beverage sales. The Food Service Director will work closely with the Health and

Wellness Subcommittee, students, and families to engage them in assisting to identify new, healthy, and appealing food choices to promote healthier eating habits. Specific strategies will be developed by the food service provider to increase participation in school meal programs, to utilize the food service area/cafeteria as a learning space; to provide nutrition information for school meals; to provide training to food service staff and cafeteria supervisors in accordance with the USDA Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals; to procure, serve and promote locally sourced Rhode Island produce and product; and to prominently display the healthiest food and beverage items. All students will be provided with at least twenty minutes for lunch in a safe, orderly, and well-supervised environment. Students may not leave a school building to secure food or beverages, nor may they order food or beverages to be delivered to the school building.

Food/Beverage Marketing and Advertising:

The District will limit marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet or exceed nutrition standards for current USDA Requirements for Federal School Meals Programs, R.I.G.L.16-21-7, U.S.D.A. Smart Snacks in Schools Regulations and Rhode Island Nutritional Requirements (RINR).

Fundraising:

Non-food based fundraisers and those that promote physical activity are encouraged. Fundraising held before, during, and up to one hour after the instructional school day must fully follow R.I.G.L.16-21-7 and U.S.D.A. Smart Snacks in Schools Regulations when food or beverages are sold. It is required that 50% of the food or beverage items offered for sale through fundraising held one hour after the close of the school day follow R.I.G.L. 16-21-7 and U.S.D.A. Smart Snacks in Schools Regulations. No foods or beverages may be sold as part of a fundraising activity during lunch service.

Staff-to-Student Rewards and Incentives:

The use of food items as part of a student incentive program is prohibited, unless food items offered adhere to R.I.G.L. 16-21-7 and U.S.D.A. Smart Snacks in Schools Regulations. When a reward or incentive program is determined to be necessary, teachers are encouraged to use physical activities and privileges as a reward or incentive. The District shall allow parents/guardians the right to refuse their child's participation to partake of food from sources other than the District's food service provider or the Chariho Area Career and Technical Center.

Student Nutrition Education:

The Chariho Regional School District delivers a comprehensive health curriculum aligned to the Rhode Island Department of Education Health Education Framework that includes nutrition education in 1st through 12th grade, including field trips to support nutrition education. Lunch and cafeteria activities will support nutrition education efforts. All instructional staff are encouraged to integrate and apply nutritional content into daily lessons when appropriate. Schools will study the nutrition guidelines as part of the student nutrition education program. While in instructional or common student spaces, all employees shall model healthy nutritional habits. The district's goal will be to encourage school gardens and food and agricultural literacy as part of the academic curriculum.

Classroom and School Celebrations:

Classroom and school celebrations will not be centered on food, except if the food items are part of a curriculum-related activity. While not prohibited, parties should be framed to discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods and encourage foods that meet nutrition standards. The District shall allow parents/guardians the right to refuse their child's participation to partake of food brought to school from the homes of other students or from sources other than the District's food service provider or the Chariho Area Career and Technical Center.

Food Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting

The Chariho Regional School District is committed to reducing food waste and promoting environmental sustainability through a comprehensive Food Waste Reduction, Recycling, and Composting Initiative. In accordance with Rhode Island law and best practices in environmental stewardship, the district will implement strategies to reduce waste through student and staff education, recycling programs, food recovery efforts when appropriate, and the collection of organic materials for composting. The district will collaborate with food service providers, municipal partners, community organizations, and waste management agencies to develop sustainable waste diversion practices that support healthier schools and communities.

A key component of this initiative is student leadership and engagement. Each school will provide opportunities for students to serve as **Waste Warriors or Rangers** through internships and volunteer roles. Waste Warriors will help educate peers on proper waste sorting, assist in monitoring cafeteria waste stations, and promote recycling and composting efforts to ensure materials are diverted from landfills. The district will also integrate sustainability, environmental science, and food waste reduction concepts into classroom instruction, service-learning opportunities, internships, and extracurricular activities. Through these experiences, students will develop leadership, collaboration, problem-solving, and responsible citizenship skills while contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable school environment.

Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods/Beverages:

All foods/beverages sold during the school day (from midnight to one hour after the instructional day) outside of the reimbursable meal program must meet the nutrition standards of USDA Smart Snacks in Schools and R.I.G.L 16-21-7. In addition, the Chariho Regional School District strongly encourages the availability of nutrient-dense foods for all school functions and activities before, during, and after the school day.

Foods:

- Encourage the consumption of nutrient-dense foods, i.e. whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats.
- Packaged items will have no more than 200 calories and any entrée item for a la carte sale will have no more than 350 calories.
- Items shall contain no more than 35% of their total calories derived from fat.
- Items shall contain no more than 10% of their total calories derived from saturated fat.
- Items shall contain no more than 35% sugar by weight.
- Avoid branded “look-alike” snacks that have been reformulated to meet school nutrition standards but aren’t available for purchase in retail stores.

Beverages:

- Students and staff will have access to free and safe drinking water throughout the day. Students are allowed to bring water bottles into classrooms.
- Only milk, water, and beverages containing 100% fruit or vegetable juice may be sold; the serving size for elementary schools is 8 oz and for secondary schools, 12 oz.
- Beverages with added sugar or caffeine cannot be sold.

Mental Wellness

The Chariho Regional School District recognizes that our schools need to foster a climate of safety, security, and belonging for all students and adults. A safe environment builds respectful relationships, enhances productive learning and teaching, promotes school engagement, and academic success.

The district believes the following core competencies are essential elements of building a safe and secure environment. We support embedding these competencies into our work in our school communities. We strive to consistently ensure that our educators and educator support professionals receive professional development focused on mental wellness and aligned with current competencies to support all students.

The Collaboration for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five core groups of social and emotional competencies:

- Self-awareness - being able to understand one's feelings and beliefs, as well as developing self-confidence.
- Self-management - learning to manage and express emotions appropriately, controlling impulses, overcoming challenges, setting goals, and preserving
- Social awareness - seeing other points of view and empathizing with others, and learning to accept differences
- Relationship skills - developing healthy and respectful relationships; managing peer pressure; and handling conflict appropriately
- Responsible decision-making - considering a variety of factors when making decisions and being aware of the consequences

Family Wellness Education:

Wellness education will be provided to families at all levels. This education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the district website, articles and information provided in district or school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, and through other appropriate means. The Health and Wellness Subcommittee shall contribute to this effort. Schools will encourage opportunities and events that promote physical activity for family and community members.

Staff Wellness Education:

Nutrition and physical activity educational opportunities will be provided to all school staff. These educational opportunities may include, but not be limited to, the distribution of educational and informational materials and the arrangement of presentations and workshops that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles, health assessments, fitness activities, and other appropriate nutrition and physical activity-related topics. The Health and Wellness Subcommittee shall contribute to this effort.

STUDENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A quality physical education program is an essential component for all students to learn about and participate in physical activity. Physical activity will be included in a school's education program from grades Pre-K through 12. Physical activity will include instructional physical education, in accordance with SHAPE (Society for Health and Physical Educators) America's National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for Pre-K to 12 Physical Education, as well as extra-curricular activities and required recess, as mandated by RI General Law.

Physical Education

Students will participate in physical education classes taught by certified physical education/health/adaptive physical education teachers in grades kindergarten through twelve. The School Committee approved that the physical education curriculum will be implemented by all educators; the curriculum shall be reviewed every five years. Teachers of physical education will participate in related professional development activities and implement research-based practices and teaching methods.

R.I.G.L. 16-22-4 requires an average of at least twenty minutes per school day of health and physical education at all grade levels. When possible, mandatory formal physical education time will extend beyond that which is required.

Intramural Sports, Interscholastic Sports and Club Activities

The Chariho Regional School District shall offer a comprehensive interscholastic sports program at both the Middle School and High School. Participation in interscholastic sports will be governed by the Eligibility Requirements for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Policy and the Athletic Handbook.

Intramural sports shall be offered at all schools. Six sports (two per fall, winter, and spring) shall be offered at each secondary school. Three club activities (one per fall, winter, and spring), which shall be designed to encourage physical activity, will be offered at each elementary school.

Where appropriate, participation in intramural sports will be governed by the Eligibility Requirements for Athletics and Extracurricular Activities Policy and the Athletic Handbook.

Recess and Physical Activity Breaks

Recess in the form of unstructured play will be available to students in grades kindergarten through eight on a daily basis. A minimum of twenty minutes per day, as per R.I.G.L. 16-22-4.2, will be provided in elementary grades (K-6) and a minimum of ten minutes per day will be provided in grades seven and eight. The withholding of recess as discipline for an event unrelated to recess shall be prohibited unless approved by the principal with notification to parents/guardians. Supervisors of recess shall receive training, as necessary. Teachers may use their discretion in allowing brief, reasonable physical activity breaks during an instructional period or block. School Administrators shall have the discretion to hold indoor recess due to inclement weather or other concerns related to student safety during recess. School Administrators shall have the discretion to exceed the minimum allotted time for recess as they deem appropriate, including, but not limited to, awarding additional recess time as a reward/incentive. Physical activity may not be used as a punishment.

Physical Activity and the Community

The Chariho Regional School District will make its facilities available to outside groups for the purpose of promoting physical activity in accordance with the Use of School Facilities Policy.

Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting

The Superintendent (or designee) will be responsible for leading the District's implementation plan. The principal or director of each building shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy and will work with the District Health and Wellness Subcommittee in order to assess progress and determine areas in need of improvement. A review of the Health and Wellness Policy shall be included in staff orientations at the beginning of the school year. School Improvement Teams will review the policy annually to ensure implementation of the policy at the school level.

Annual goals to improve implementation of the Health and Wellness Policy will be established. An implementation plan, including strategies for attaining each goal, will be based on a review and consideration of evidence-based strategies. The Health and Wellness Committee will forward any recommended revisions and updates due to new federal and/or state regulations or evidence-based practices to the Superintendent and School Committee.

The Health and Wellness Committee will report to the Superintendent and School Committee on the Health and Wellness Policy implementation and evaluation every three years, at a minimum. The report will be made available to the school community and include: How school practices align with the policy, How the Health and Wellness Policy compares to model health and wellness policies, and progress made in attaining the goals of the Health and Wellness Policy.

This policy, along with any evaluations and descriptions of the progress made in attaining the goals of the policy, will be posted and accessible on the School District website (www.chariho.k12.ri.us) to inform the school community and the public about the content and implementation of the District Health and Wellness Policy.

Revised: 2/13/07, 6/11/13 - Effective: 7/1/13; Revised: 5/26/15 – Effective 7/1/15; Revised and Effective 1/17/17; Revised and Effective 5/26/20; Revised and Effective 7/11/23; Revised and Effective 6/9/26