

Model and Sample Policies - Physical Activity & Recess

From [Alliance for a Healthier Generation Model Wellness Policy](#):

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and the district is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education. All schools in the district will be encouraged to participate in *Let's Move!* Active Schools (www.letsmoveschools.org) in order to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason [*insert if appropriate: "This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements*]. The district will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the District will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The District will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

[Optional additional policy language:

- *Through a formal joint or shared use agreements indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours. [Change Lab Solutions](#) provides guidance regarding joint or shared use agreements.*
- *The District will work with schools to ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage activity for as many students as possible.]*

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all or most days during the school year (Insert as appropriate any language such as: *This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days*). If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. [*Depending on regions or weather conditions, districts may insert weather guidelines or guidelines for outside play here. OR District could create new ones such as: "Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature is above/below District-set temperature, inclusive of wind chill factors, during "code orange" or "code red" days, during storms with lightening or thunder, or at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions."*]

In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable. [*District can insert indoor recess guidelines here, which might delineate a minimum amount of time for activity opportunities during indoor recess. If these guidelines do not yet exist, the DWC will create them or*

facilitate their development on a school-by-school basis and include them here.] [If District opts for school-by-school indoor recess guidelines, insert: Each school will maintain and enforce its own indoor recess guidelines.]

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

From [Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Model District School Wellness Policy](#):

All students will have opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class on a daily basis. Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle. Students will be encouraged to reduce sedentary time, and will not be required to engage in sedentary activities for more than two hours without an opportunity to stretch and move around. Short (3-5 minute) “energy release” physical activity breaks will be provided between classes in elementary school, for example, programs such as Take 10! And ABC for Fitness will be used to incorporate short activity breaks into the day.

Teachers will be expected to incorporate opportunities for physical activity in the classroom whenever possible and will be encouraged to serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students.

Recess

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess before the lunch period, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity will be encouraged. Outdoor recess will only be withheld in the event of extreme weather, as defined by the district (this may vary regionally). In the event that recess must be held indoors, teachers and staff will follow indoor recess guidelines, developed by the school’s Wellness Committee, to ensure adequate physical activity for students.

Physical Activity Programs

Elementary, middle, and high school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs and intramural programs. High school and middle school will offer interscholastic sports programs to all students.

State Policy Examples:

From [Hawaii Department of Education Wellness Guidelines](#):

The goal of physical education (PE) is to support all students in achieving the knowledge, skills and confidence to be physically active for a lifetime. Participation in PE also helps students reach the national recommendation of 60 minutes of physical activity per day.

Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Research also shows that physical activity can help improve student academic achievement, including grades and standardized test scores.

There are 10 guidelines to support physical education and activity:

1. All required physical education classes are aligned with the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards for physical education.
2. Required physical education classes have instructional periods totaling a minimum of 45 minutes per week for grades K-3, 55 minutes per week for grades 4-5, 107 minutes for elementary grade 6, and 200 minutes per week for secondary grades 6-12.

3. The school ensures that state-certified physical education instructors teach all physical education classes and have a student/teacher ratio similar to other classes.*
4. Each secondary school's physical education department provides continuing support to students and their families to help them participate in physical activity outside of physical education class.
5. All students have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, during which students are encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
6. The school provides information to families to help them incorporate physical activity into students' lives.
7. The school discourages extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity.
8. When mandatory school-wide testing makes it necessary for students to be inactive for an extended period, schools will give students periodic breaks to stand and be moderately active unless the testing protocol specifies otherwise.*
9. The school does not use physical activity as punishment.
10. The school does not withhold opportunities for physical activity as punishment.

** These Guidelines are conditional and not mandatory at this time.*

[Michigan State Board of Education Model Policy on Quality Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools](#)