



Wellness Policy

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Policy Statement

The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC), encompassing both the Marie Philip School (MPS) and the Walden School (WS), is committed to providing a school environment that promotes, protects, and supports students' physical health, nutrition, social-emotional development, and long-term well-being.

Recognizing that optimal health and emotional balance are foundational to learning, TLC aligns its entire educational environment—classrooms, residential programs, dining facilities, and extracurricular activities—to foster lifelong healthy habits, physical activity, and social-emotional growth.

School Wellness Committee (SWC) & Governance

Committee Composition & Leadership

TLC will convene a School Wellness Committee (SWC) that meets at least three to four times per year to establish goals, oversee implementation, and lead the triennial review and update of this Local Wellness Policy.

To ensure comprehensive representation across both MPS and Walden School programs, the SWC includes, to the extent possible:

- School Administrators and Program Leadership
- Physical Education and Health Education Teachers
- Representatives from the School Nutrition and Cafeteria Program
- School Health Professionals, nurses, and Clinical/Mental Health Services Staff
- Parents, Caregivers, and Students (when appropriate)
- Community members and representatives reflecting the diversity of the TLC community

Responsibilities & Public Communication

- **Implementation Oversight:** The superintendent or supervisor will convene the SWC, facilitate policy updates, and ensure all school-sponsored events during the school day adhere to policy guidelines.
- **Annual Public Reporting:** TLC will inform families and the public annually about the content, updates, and implementation status of this policy via the school website.
- **Triennial Assessment:** The SWC will conduct a formal assessment every three years to evaluate policy compliance, progress toward goals, and alignment with state and federal standards, making the results publicly available.

Nutrition & Food Standards



USDA & MA DESE Compliance

TLC participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. All meals and beverages served or sold comply with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) standards and USDA Smart Snacks in School Standards.

- **Nutritional Quality:** Meals served are healthy, nutritious, diverse, and appealing, ensuring a balance between optimal nutrition, cultural preferences, special dietary needs, and student acceptance.
- **Dining Environment:** Meals are served in a clean, safe, and pleasant environment with adequate time for students to eat. Staff provide positive supervision and role modeling.
- **Hydration:** Free, safe, unflavored drinking water is accessible to all students throughout the school day and in dining areas during meal times.
- **Free/Reduced Privacy:** Measures are maintained to protect the privacy of students receiving free or reduced-price meals.
- **Menu Transparency:** Breakfast and lunch menus are published digitally and/or in hard copy, including nutritional content and ingredient listings when available.

Food Safety, Shared Foods & Marketing

- **Food Safety & Staff Training:** Cafeteria staff maintain ServSafe certification and complete annual allergy training and USDA Professional Standards training.
- **Shared Foods Policy:** Apart from sanctioned curricular or instructional activities, parents, students, and staff are prohibited from bringing outside food items to share with students during the school day.
- **Fundraising & Vending:** TLC does not operate vending machines. School fundraising activities are encouraged to offer non-food or allergy-sensitive items.
- **Marketing Standards:** Any food or beverage marketing on campus (posters, flyers, educational materials) is restricted exclusively to items meeting USDA Smart Snacks standards.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) & Mental Health

TLC recognizes that emotional health is as vital as physical well-being. SEL is embedded across all departments to improve educational equity, foster safe and inclusive environments, and strengthen staff-student connections.



SEL Framework & Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

- Core SEL Competencies: Dedicated Health classes and residential programming focus on:
 - Decision-Making & Problem-Solving
 - Self-Management & Goal Setting
 - Social Awareness, Relationship & Communication Skills
 - Self-Awareness & Analyzing Influences
- Department-Level Indicators: Principals and department teams identify targeted SEL indicators tailored to student needs (e.g., Youth Voice & Engagement in Elementary; Supportive Classroom Climates & Supportive Discipline in Middle School).
- Tier 1 Supports: Each department commits to at least three core Tier 1 supports focusing on:
 - Staff-student connections
 - Explicit SEL instruction
 - Environmental visual supports
- Curricular Resources:
 - ECC & Elementary: *Conscious Discipline* and *Responsive Classroom* approaches.
 - K–12 Programs: *Second Step* digital curriculum across elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- Support Pathways: TLC maintains clear referral pathways and resources to ensure students, families, and staff can access support for emotional and mental health challenges.

Physical Education & Physical Activity

TLC aligns its physical activity guidelines with the standards of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and MA DESE guidelines.

Physical Education Curriculum

- Sequential Learning: Students receive age-appropriate, sequential physical education instruction promoting lifelong active habits, health concepts, and movement skills (guided by TLC Curriculum Maps for Grades K–5, 6–8, and 9–12).
- Inclusion & Accommodations: PE instruction is fully accessible to all students, with modified equipment and adapted instruction provided as necessary.
- Teacher Certification: Physical education instructors meet or exceed licensure requirements set by the MA DESE.



Physical Activity Throughout the Day

- **Daily Movement & Recess:** Physical activity is integrated throughout the school day via recess, classroom movement breaks, and programs such as *BOKS* or *Active Kids & Minds*.
- **Recess Protection:** Recess and play time are essential to physical, social, and emotional development; recess will not be withheld as a disciplinary measure except under extraordinary safety circumstances.
- **Weather & Safety Guidelines:** Staff exercise appropriate discretion regarding outdoor recess during extreme heat or cold, adhering to DESE *Weather Guidelines for Children* and individual student care plans.
- **Extracurricular Programs:** TLC actively encourages school-sponsored after-school programs and athletics that promote physical activity, teamwork, and wellness.

Community Partnerships & Staff Wellness

- **Staff Role Modeling & Support:** TLC supports staff in modeling healthy eating, physical activity, and social-emotional wellness within the school community.
- **Community Alignment:** TLC builds and maintains partnerships with local healthcare providers, hospitals, and community organizations to extend wellness resources, health services, and referral networks to students, staff, and families.