

Wellness Policy

Revised/Renewed: October 2017

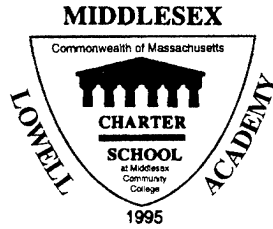
Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a wellness policy for the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School (LMACS) that will address the requirements of the “Act Relative to School Nutrition” of July, 2010 and of the section 204 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. LMACS is committed to promoting health and wellness for the students and staff within the school. LMACS supports guidelines for nutrition education, physical activity and for food and beverages sold and served within our school.

LMACS will promote the 5-2-1-0 message (at least 5 fruits/vegetables a day, no more than 2 hours screen time/day, 1 hour of exercise /day and 0 tobacco and illegal substance use). In addition to this, LMACS will encourage activities geared to optimal health and wellbeing for all students.

Nutrition

- The health education curriculum at LMACS will follow the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) Curriculum Frameworks on nutrition education to promote healthy lifestyles.
- LMACS will ensure that school breakfasts and lunches are consistent with recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children in nutritional content, portion size and quality.
- LMACS students are offered and encouraged to participate in the free LMACS breakfast program through Middlesex Community College cafeteria. The breakfast is available before school begins at LMACS.
- LMACS will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. (It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.) LMACS students are all given daily lunch tickets that LMACS subsidizes regardless of eligibility, for lunch at Middlesex Community College’s cafeteria. Lunch break is 40 minutes, which includes time for students to walk 2 blocks to the Cafeteria.
- LMACS will supply healthy snacks during school activities in accordance to the Massachusetts Competitive Foods and Beverages Nutrition Standards. Cold water is always available during the school day for all students.



Physical Activity

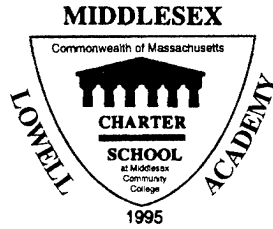
- The health education curriculum at LMACS will follow the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) Curriculum Frameworks on the importance of physical exercise education to promote healthy lifestyles.
- LMACS will provide physical education classes for all students for at least 90 hours per school year.
- LMACS will collaborate with University of Massachusetts- Lowell physical therapy students to promote “health and wellness Fridays”. During this time LMACS students will be exposed to education and instruction on leading a healthy, active lifestyle.
- LMACS will proactively encourage lifetime physical activity and wellness through education and field trips that include hiking and physical activity. (ex. Mt Wachusett, Camp Massapoag)
- LMACS will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity to further promote physical activity and wellness.
- LMACS will collaborate with local groups and agencies to provide parent education around healthy choices, good nutrition, a balanced and healthy use of screen time, and the benefit of increased physical activity for children/teens.

School Health Data Reporting

- LMACS will check student’s vision and hearing to identify any impairment that may affect student’s performance.

Mental Health

- LMACS has a tiered approach curriculum to assist our students in meeting mental health needs. The curriculum design fosters optimal mental health by breaking down the student community into three phases.
 - Phase 1- all phase 1/T1 students transition into LMACS by taking STEM readiness (math & science), LMACS seminar (English/humanities) and Integrated Art (a class that focuses on art as a way of coping with stress and emotions)
 - Phase 2- Life is Complicated – a psychology course taught by a licensed social worker, a required health class- taught by the school nurse and includes a mental health unit containing the “Break-free from Depression” curriculum from Children’s Hospital
 - Phase 3- Career Pathways, Internship, Youth Business Institute to transition seniors to further encourage academic, career and social success



- School Social Workers conduct a bio psychosocial assessment on all new students in order to identify students who need mental health services.
- LMACS will meet the cultural needs of our diverse population by:
 - Collaboration with The Merrimack Reparatory Theater for our students to attend various plays
 - Collaboration with Middlesex Community College for our students to attend different ethnic and cultural performances throughout the school year
- LMACS will invite guest speakers to the school to educate our students on various teen topics. Guest speakers are chosen who have the knowledge and experience our students can relate to in their daily lives. This enables our students to have the information necessary to make safe and educated decisions.

Other Health Related Activities

- LMACS will continue to work with Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) and other local resources to prevent teen pregnancy and STI's.
- LMACS will provide students the opportunity to be involved with a tobacco cessation group.
- LMACS will offer flu clinics in the fall to interested students and teachers.
- LMACS provides a Life Choices course as part of the curriculum that includes talking about healthy relationships, illegal substance abuse and other life choices that teens are facing today.
- LMACS provides three full time Licensed Social Workers on site to counsel students on Mental Health related issues.
- LMACS provides a full time Registered Nurse on site to assess and manage student medical issues.
- LMACS collaborates with Middlesex Community College in Health and Wellness Fairs during the school year.
- LMACS is committed to and enforces a no tolerance policy on drugs and alcohol.

Ongoing

Review and change policy, curriculum and operating procedures to promote healthy lifestyles and appropriate nutritional and physical practices for all members of the LMACS school community during the school year.