

LIVING HEALTHY



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WESTERN HEALTH/ WESTERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS

Recent statistics about the general physical inactivity in this country are quite alarming.

- In 2007, the average twelve year old Canadian boy was 14 pounds heavier (and 2 inches taller) than in 1981.
- The average Canadian child spends 42 hours a week watching screens.
- Only 12% of Nfld. youth gets enough physical activity to maintain good health.
- With younger Canadians who are inactive, we are going to see high blood pressure and Type 2 diabetes arising at earlier ages. These conditions will result in more heart attacks and strokes.
- Newfoundland and Labrador ranked in last place for Healthy Weight out of 13 provinces and territories.

The Western School District acknowledges the responsibility schools play in providing an environment that promotes good health for all students. Participation in a variety of physical activities at an early age is crucial to promote a life-long commitment to a healthy lifestyle. To help schools with this, the Western School District has established a draft set of *Guidelines for Increasing Physical Activity of Students*. **We would welcome your feedback on these guidelines** before this becomes an appendix to our Nutrition and Healthy Living Policy in the fall. Please forward your comments on these guidelines to Bill Allan at bill.allan@wnlsd.ca

1. Schools shall adhere to the recommended *instructional time guidelines for the Physical Education curriculum and the Health curriculum* as outlined by the Department of Education Program of Studies. Where schools are challenged to strictly adhere to the guidelines for Physical Education due to capacity or other issues, the school shall forward its plan for Physical Education to the Assistant Director of Education (Programs) or designate to review.

2. Teachers shall deliver the *Physical Education curriculum and Health curriculum* as outlined in the Physical Education and Health Curriculum Guides.

3. Each K – 6 school shall establish guidelines that support and provide *sufficient time for outside unstructured playtime at recess and lunch* (subject to weather conditions and student safety as determined by school administration).

4. Daily physical activity can be achieved through a regular physical education class. It can also be achieved through structured activity (intramurals, clubs, dance) or unstructured activity (outside play) that can be offered before and after school. These activities, however should complement and not substitute for the physical education program.

5. Schools shall *promote active transportation* to and from school. This can be done in a variety of ways such as: providing bicycle racks for students to secure their bikes and hosting special days such as the Kids Eat Smart Walk to Breakfast Day.

6. Teachers in K – 6 schools, with the support of District Office personnel, shall use *physical activity to help diversify instruction* in academic subject areas.

7. Schools shall actively participate in the *Living Healthy Commotions* each school year.

8. Schools are encouraged to establish a *Living Healthy School Team* to help implement good nutrition, physical activity, and other health-related initiatives. This team could be part of the Safe and Caring Schools initiative.

9. School staffs are *encouraged to act as positive role models* to promote healthy lifestyles within the school environment.

10. Schools are encouraged to *partner with local organizations* to support their school health projects. Possible contacts to assist schools might include: local businesses, service organizations, School Council, Home & School Association, community recreation groups, Community Health Nurse, School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant, and Regional Wellness Coalition.

ENERGY DRINK POLICY

Energy drinks (Red Bull, Monster, and Rockstar) are beverages that claim to stimulate and energize the user. They contain a large amount of caffeine and other ingredients that makes the user more alert and delays sleep. While most energy drinks do caution that children should not consume these beverages, there are currently no regulations prohibiting the sale to children.

One student in the Western School District, a star basketball player, recently experienced black-outs, could not breathe, and thought he was having a heart attack after consuming several of these drinks. The doctor sent him for an EKG and he was forced off the team while waiting for the results. All tests came back normal. Too many energy drinks were seen to be the blame for the heart irregularities. Now back on the court, this student counts himself lucky. With incidents like this, school administrators have expressed concern about the consumption of these drinks. Students who drink them have increased behavioral problems and have difficulty concentrating in class.

The Western School District Nutrition Policy presently states: *As schools are concerned about their effect on students' behavior and health, these drinks are strongly discouraged on school property.*

While the Policy initially did not ban these drinks, many individual schools have done so on their own. After consultation with school principals, the Western District has decided to change the wording of the policy to: *As schools are concerned about their effect on students' behavior and health, these drinks are not permitted on school property.*

This change in policy will hopefully be in place for the fall of 2010. We are presently working with Western Health staff to plan education for students on the dangers of these drinks. We hope to have this ready for September, 2010.

STEPPING OUT CHALLENGE

The Stepping Out activity for April was a choice of Jump Rope for Heart or Walk on Wednesdays. Of the schools that completed one of these activities, one school was chosen for a \$100 prize draw. The school that was drawn was Humber Elementary. Congratulations!

The final Stepping Out activity for this year is the Walk Across Newfoundland/ Canada Challenge.

If your school is participating in this activity, please email me by June 4. I will do a draw from the participating schools for the \$100 prize.

Each of the schools whose name was drawn during the year for the Stepping Out activities will receive a \$100 cheque in June.

ACTIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Memory Game (1 – 6)

The idea of this game is to help students develop their memory skills while including some physical activity. Divide the class into groups of 10 or 12. Have a pattern established in advance. Begin with one rubber chicken, ball, or bean bag in each group. One person passes a ball or a bean bag to another person.

- To begin, the person passing the ball could state their own name. (This can be used as an icebreaker to introduce new classmates.)

- After doing this once, change the game so that the person now tossing the ball must now state the name of the person they are throwing to.

- Change the game so that they now count by 7's (or 6's, 8's, or 9's) so the person throwing the ball states 7, 14, 21,...

- Have students create a story one line at a time as the ball gets tossed from person to person.

DPA PROGRAM (K - 6): ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Over the past three years, 23 K - 6 schools in the Western School District have participated in the Daily Physical Activity (DPA) initiative. Teachers have learned how to use physical activity to help diversify instruction.

We recently received funding from the Dept. of Health and Community Services to expand this program to 10 new schools next year. Participating teachers will receive a one-day Inservice Session, an Active School Resource Manual and Resource Kit, and weekly support from a facilitator. Interested teachers and administrators are asked to discuss this DPA program with their staffs over the next couple of weeks. If a school wants to be considered for the training sessions in the fall of 2010, principals should let me know by Friday, June 11.
