

**OUR CHILDREN
ARE OUR FUTURE**

Kainai Board of Education



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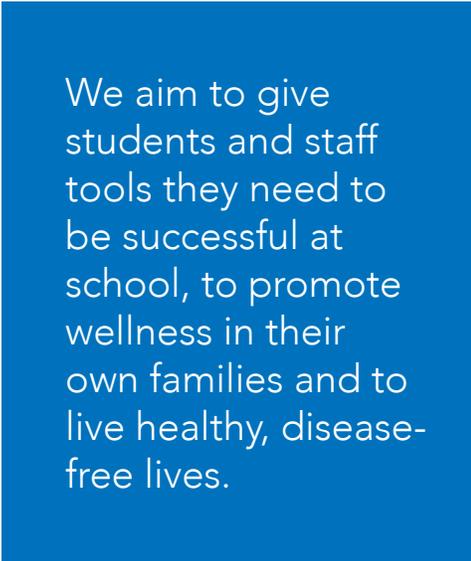


Introduction

The Kainai Board of Education supports the health of students, staff and the community as a whole — wellness of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self. This policy is rooted in Kainayssini and our belief in promoting the rights, powers and welfare of our nation, while acknowledging the ethical space where such beliefs meet Western philosophy.

We create this policy knowing that our community lives with the effects of intergenerational trauma, but also that our culture, traditions and land give us the strength and knowledge needed to thrive. We know that school is a place where knowledge is shared and where students are prepared for the rest of their lives. **We aim to give students and staff tools they need to be successful at school, to promote wellness in their own families and to live healthy, disease-free lives.**

This wellness handbook provides further clarity and implementation support for the Kainai Board of Education Wellness Policy.



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Spiritual Well-being

RESILIENCE

We take every opportunity to develop resilience and strength in our youth by helping them to experience mastery, independence, belonging and generosity through the following:

- We prioritize youth engagement in sports, arts, and cultural activities. Coach training and funding for sports programs, arts facilitation and training for arts teachers, and funding for knowledge keepers to mentor youth about their culture are of prime importance for us.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

We are a people of oral tradition, where lessons are passed down through teachings and storytelling. We are proud of our Blackfoot language and strive to restore its widespread use through the following:

- The Kainai Board of Education employs a Kainai Studies Director as a language consultant that supports all schools.
- Blackfoot language is taught as part of the curriculum for all grade levels and spoken as often as possible across curricula and in extra-curricular activities.
- Our schools participate in ceremony regularly throughout the year, including pipe ceremonies, pow wows and rounddances, where students, staff and parents are invited to connect and share.

LEARNING FROM PLACE

Our relationship with the land is complex and meaningful. In our history it has provided us with the means to live and today continues to teach our youth the skills of observation, interpretation and adaptation, skills relevant to contemporary education. We honour this connection by:

- Offering meaningful education experiences on the land through curriculum, traditional teachings, physical activity and sport and extracurricular programming.

“To maintain ourselves under the guidance of our Creator.”
– Kainayssini

Mental Well-being

MENTAL HEALTH

Colonization, marginalization and cultural oppression have contributed to significant challenges in the mental health of our community, with effects continuing to impact the self-development of our youth. For us, good mental health requires the ability to acknowledge, understand and manage thoughts and feelings, and recognizes the traditional practices of prayer, ceremony, counselling and the accumulated wisdom of Elders. Mental well-being is supported in our school communities in the following ways:

- The Kainai Board of Education ensures that professional development on mental health and mental illness is provided regularly to all staff, to promote self-care and to assist in their teaching practice.
- Education about mental health and mental illness is taught as part of the health curriculum to all students to increase awareness, support early intervention and reduce stigma.
- Students are provided opportunities to learn about and practice techniques to manage stress and anxiety in class, during non-instructional time and across curricula.
- The Kainai Board of Education maintains partnerships with Elders and traditional healers as well as Western service providers, to assist staff, students and families access help they need.

ADDICTION PREVENTION

Drugs and alcohol are not a part of our culture, but they have become a challenge in our community. To ensure that our youth and their families have every opportunity to overcome these risks, we implement the following:

- Alcohol and drug awareness and addiction prevention are taught within the health curriculum for all middle and high school students.
- Principals maintain support networks consisting of school counsellors, community members, Elders, traditional healers, Family School Liaison workers and health partners to enable access to help for students who are affected by addiction. Schools will support students in accessing treatment for any substance-related challenges by referral to treatment centres including Kainai Youth Wellness Center; Wood's Homes; Pound - Maker's; Kainai Healing Lodge; Kainai Children's Services Safe Home, etc.
- Schools may offer drug counselling education and group sessions (e.g. Aisiimohki & NNADAP) as extracurricular programming.

Tobacco use (chew, smoking, vaporizers) is not permitted on school grounds other than in ceremony.



“To initiate a sense of responsibility to our people and nation.”
– Kainayssini

Emotional Well-being

SENSE OF BELONGING

We know that every person has inherent value and a unique path in the world. We are committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, safe and caring environment for all students, parents and staff. The entire school community shares in this responsibility through the following:

- Upholding learning and working environments that are free from lateral violence, bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. Allegations of such behaviours are investigated in a timely and respectful manner by designated site administrators.
- Adhering to this policy and the Kainai Board of Education's Student Code of Conduct at all schools, but also any school-related activities. This applies to all forms of communication, face-to-face, online, by phone, or otherwise.



“To allow for freedom of expression and diversity.”

– Kainayssini

HEALTHY, BALANCED RELATIONSHIPS

It is a challenging reality that some of our students have difficult home lives and haven't learned to express themselves in healthy ways or develop balanced relationships. Our schools are places where healthy social interactions are modelled and practiced through the following:

- Respect is fostered in relationships that exist between students, staff, parents, administrators and the community. Principals ensure opportunities for parents and community members to engage in the school through activities such as parent-teacher conferences, celebrations, volunteerism and newsletters. Teachers actively seek opportunities for students to learn curriculum content through community outreach.
- Leadership is developed in our youth to teach them how valuable they are. Mentorship programs like the Early Childhood Education program at Kainai High School are encouraged to allow teenagers to mentor the younger students and recognize their personal strengths and abilities.
- Student groups that promote a healthy sense of belonging are encouraged as part of extracurricular programming.
- Students have access to outside programs and speakers that give students hope and opportunity.



Physical Well-being

NUTRITION

Eating the right foods in the right amounts and understanding food choices contribute to healthy growth and development and have a positive impact on learning. We know that because of lack of funding and transportation, not all families can provide the food they'd like to for their children. Our School Nutrition Program helps address this, and is governed by the following:

- The Kainai Board of Education provides staff and facilities to ensure one morning snack and one afternoon meal is available for each student daily at no cost to the families.
- Monthly menus are created in consultation with a community dietitian, and conform to the KBE Nutrition Guidelines (see Appendix). Menus are accommodating to those who are diabetic, lactose intolerant or have other medical needs or food allergies. Freshly prepared foods and fruits, vegetables, grains and meat are key priorities.
- Water is available at all times to students, and milk is favoured over juice as a beverage selection. School-filtered water is preferred at all schools and events over bottled water.
- Foods provided or sold in vending machines, canteens and in after-school programs, and foods used for fundraising, align with the KBE Nutrition Guidelines. For example, no fried foods, no caffeinated drinks or high sugar drinks (pop, sweetened drinks) will be served. Everything that is sold must be approved by the school principal, who may consult with the community dietitian.
- School and classroom celebrations (e.g. talent shows, round dances, pow wows, birthday parties, Halloween, meet the teacher, parent teacher interviews, Christmas concert, Christmas parties, career fair, graduation, track and field, prom, Easter, year-end parties, etc.) align to the KBE Nutrition Guidelines. Healthy cultural/traditional foods are highest priority, though some cultural foods may be selected based on their cultural value rather than their nutritional content.

“To continue to seek better means of survival.”

– Kainayssini

- School curriculum includes education on healthy food choices, both our Blackfoot traditional foods and healthy Western foods. Education includes how to shop for/wild-harvest foods, how to prepare and store foods and personal menu planning. This education is provided both to teachers as professional development and to students through their teachers, community Elders and volunteers.
- Nutrition information and decision making is made clear to parents, grandparents and other family members through nutrition notes, newsletters, public presentation and other means. When families are asked to bring food to school (e.g. making treats for the class), the Kainai Board of Education offers ideas for alternatives to sweets that still provide a treat for the students' classrooms.
- The Kainai Board of Education partners with the community to participate in food security initiatives such as school garden programs and the Good Food Box.
- Facilities operated by the Kainai Board of Education adhere to the Food Regulation of the Alberta Public Health Act. All food staff must have Food Handling Certificate.
- Staff role model and promote healthy food choices in their own eating habits.
- Waste and access to food are considered in implementing nutrition/wellness policies, keeping in mind that change is gradual, and wellness is an ever-changing journey.
- Education is provided for all staff, parents, students and community members to learn about the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth and the First Nations Food Guide, why KBE follows these guidelines, and how this can be implemented in the home and community.
- Education is provided at least yearly to all nutrition and canteen staff to have training on Nutrition Guidelines, diabetes, healthy menu planning and portion control.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Daily physical activity (DPA) has been keeping our community strong and healthy for generations, but today technology, online activities and other barriers are distracting our children and community members from getting the movement they need. By integrating physical activity into our regular schedules, we set our children on a path to be active and well for their entire lives, while boosting their health and increasing their focus in class. We know that this is a lifelong process, but through our actions, we hope to give youth a taste of the lifelong benefits daily physical activity will hold for them and promote a lifestyle change that will benefit generations to come.

- The Kainai Board of Education acknowledges that physical activity is not a break from learning, but constitutes learning, and requires schools to offer no less than 30 instructional minutes daily for students, either in physical education class or integrated across subject areas.
- All Kainai Board of Education schools partner with DPA experts (e.g. Ever Active Schools) to train at least one teacher at each school in Physical Literacy and Fundamental Movement Skills. Teachers work with these experts to enhance curriculum and increase movement throughout the day, including in class and at recess/after school time.
- Principals ensure at least 45 minutes are provided daily for active free play at breaks during recess and lunch period, and may work with teachers and staff to structure active opportunities (i.e. walking programs in the morning, organized games during recess).
- Traditional games and activities are regularly offered as physical activity opportunities, in partnership with community members and ceremonialists.

- Principals and teachers foster physical literacy through a school culture that values the joy of movement, teaches fundamental movement skills and provides opportunities to be active across all curricula through a variety of seasons and settings. A variety of activities and clubs are offered, including team sports and individual sports, non-competitive, drop-in and play-based activities.
- Principals ensure that teachers have access to the necessary facilities, equipment and resources to support the implementation of daily physical activity (e.g. guides for teachers, daily physical activity bins, professional development opportunities).

Facilities and grounds are maintained and available for the safe use of students and staff. Principals connect teachers with in-service training prior to and during implementation.

- Schools offer opportunities for staff to role model positive physical activity, including offering classes or clubs like Zumba/yoga, and incentivizing walking programs.





Support for all Schools

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- Administrators and staff have access to education to address conflicts, including de-escalation, supportive conversations and interpersonal conflict management.
- Schools actively celebrate National Events (e.g. Diabetes Awareness Week, Addictions Week, Mental Health Month, etc.) integrating these events in their yearly planning, sharing lessons and collaborating on events with other schools wherever possible.
- Opportunities are created for staff to actively share curricular outlines to integrate wellness activities in their lesson planning.



This policy
was created in
collaboration with
Ever Active Schools.

