



# Creating Healthy Schools

## 9.2 Providing Physical Activity Breaks

### What is the current policy?

Our school district cares about the health and well-being of students and understands the importance of physical activity. For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and for

students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. As such, staff must incorporate regular physical activity breaks for students during classroom time.

## Ideas!

### How can your school get more involved?

- Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

### Physical Activity Suggestions

- Come up with fun movement ideas, such as pounce like a tiger or wiggle like an inch worm.
- Have your students take a break and stretch or do simple yoga poses.
- Incorporate physical activity into "Get to Know You" activities like the name game.
- Have your students count while they run in place, do jumping jacks, etc.
- Take a walk around the school.
- Have your students take turns on choosing a physical activity idea.

### Why is this important?

Each school is required to create and implement School Wellness Policies. One of our school policies is to include regular physical activity breaks for students during class time. Teachers have the opportunity to implement these best practice recommendations for regular physical activity breaks for students during classroom time.

Children are not meeting the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, which can directly impact their health status, growth and development, and academic performance. Regular physical activity, even in moderate amounts, has a significant impact on the health of students. Since students spend numerous hours in school, there is a great opportunity to provide more chances for physical activity. Staff can help provide some of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day through having short movement and/or physical activity breaks in the classroom.

Students have been found to work less efficiently when involved in extended periods of instructional time with no breaks. Two hours or more of inactivity are extremely discouraged. Having periodic 3 – 5 minute breaks will help improve student academic performance and reduce boredom and misbehavior.

## Resources:

- Kids Health provides an updated article regarding the benefits of and ideas for exercise breaks for elementary students. This can be accessed here: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/elementary-exercises.html>
- Eat Smart Move More NC has created a handout listing physical activity ideas for breaks. More information can be found at: <http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/FaithPlanningGuide/Texts/Ideas%20for%20PA%20Breaks%20in%20Mtgs.pdf>
- PBS information on kid friendly yoga poses. More information can be found at: <http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/sport-and-fitness/practice-yoga-with-your-child/>
- The USDA has put together a handout on classroom activity breaks. Access the handout here: [https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/5%20Physical%20Activity%20Break%20K\\_2.pdf](https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/5%20Physical%20Activity%20Break%20K_2.pdf)  
Also: [https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/6%20Physical%20Activity%20Breaks%203\\_5.pdf](https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/6%20Physical%20Activity%20Breaks%203_5.pdf)
- Take 10 integrates physical activity and nutrition education into classroom lessons. Information can be found: <http://take10.net/>

*Two other versions of this policy item are available for both administration and family to assist with implementation.*

