

## School Recess and Discipline

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### Issue

Summarize the requirement for recess in Connecticut public schools, including whether the denial of recess privileges can be used to discipline students.

### School Recess and Discipline

State law requires public schools to include a total of 20 minutes of physical exercise in each regular school day for all elementary school students ([CGS § 10-221o](#)). The law allows for an exception if the student receives special education services and has a special education plan that provides a different recess schedule.

The law also requires each local and regional board of education, by October 1, 2013, to adopt a policy addressing whether any school employee can, during the regular school day, prevent, as a form of discipline, an elementary school student from participating in the required period of physical exercise. The law leaves it to each board's discretion whether withholding recess will be allowed. The policy must apply to any teacher, substitute teacher, administrator, school superintendent, guidance counselor, psychologist, social worker, nurse, physician, school paraprofessional, or coach employed by the board.

Another law requires each board of education to adopt a policy, also by October 1, 2013, addressing whether a school employee can compel a student in any grade (Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup>) to engage in physical activity as a form of discipline ([CGS § 10-221u](#)). This law applies to the same set of employees as the recess law.

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education developed a model discipline and physical activity policy that complies with state law (see the policy in Attachment 1).

JM:bs