

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Wellness Policy

Wellness

St. Thomas Aquinas School strives to educate the whole person in mind, body and soul. In educating students about the body, we strive to develop a profound reverence for the great gift of life, their own lives and the lives of others, along with readiness to spend themselves in serving all that preserves and enhances life.

The school, governed by the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Board of Education, strives to maintain a learning and working environment that promotes and protects children's health, well being and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Archdiocesan Board of Education Policy #6145

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School supports and promotes proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance. Foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School's nutrition standards. Foods should be served with consideration toward nutritional integrity, variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging to ensure high-quality meals.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has developed a local wellness committee comprised of representatives of administration, parents, teachers and leaders in food/exercise authority and support staff. The local wellness committee has developed a plan to implement and measure the wellness policy and monitor the effectiveness of the policy. The committee will report annually to the local School Improvement Advisory Committee regarding the effectiveness of this policy.

Specific Wellness Goals:

- Nutrition Education and Promotion
- Nutrition Guidelines for all Foods Available
- Physical Activity
- Implementation and Evaluation

NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

St. Thomas Aquinas School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- *is offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program, which is part not only of physical education classes, but also part of classroom instruction in other subject areas;
- *includes promotion of enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, gardens, skiing, Iowa Health Walk, Kids Heart Challenge, One-Mile Run, Swimming, etc.
- *promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- *emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and physical activity;
- links with meal programs, other foods and nutrition-related community services.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS AVAILABLE

General Directives

Food Safety

All foods made available will follow food safety and security guidelines and comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines will continue to be implemented to prevent food illness in schools. For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations should be limited to food service staff and authorized personnel. Sharing of Foods

St. Thomas Aquinas School discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Food Service Department

The Food Service Director through the Principal will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students.

Qualification of Food Service Staff

St. Thomas Aquinas School will provide the USDA established-continuing education hours and training for all food service employees.

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- * be appealing and attractive to students;
- * be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- * meet nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal law; *
- include a variety of fruits and vegetables and menu choices.

Breakfast

To ensure that all students have breakfast either at home or at school in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will:

- * to the extent possible, operate a School Breakfast Program;
- * notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program;
- * encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials or other means.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals Program

St. Thomas Aquinas School will continue to make every effort in eliminating any social stigma attached to, and in preventing the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Toward this end, we will:

- * provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals
- * provide staff development programs that include appropriate certification and/or training programs
- * promote the availability of meals to all students

Meal Times and Scheduling

We will:

- * allow adequate time for students to receive and consume meals and provide a pleasant dining environment;
- * schedule meal period at an appropriate time
- * attempt to schedule a recess period to follow the lunch period
- * provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).

Foods must also meet several nutrient requirements:

Calorie limits:

Snack items: ≤ 200 calories

Entree items: ≤ 350 calories

Sodium limits:

Snack items: ≤ 230 mg (On July 1, 2016, snack items must contain ≤ 200 mg sodium per item.)

Entree items: ≤ 480 mg

Fat limits:

Total fat: $\leq 35\%$ of calories

Saturated fat: $< 10\%$ of calories

Trans fat: zero grams

Sugar Limit: $\leq 35\%$ of weight from total sugars in foods Beverage and Food

Food Nutrition Standards

General Standard for Competitive Food must meet all of the proposed competitive food nutrient standards and

1. Be a grain product that contains 50% or more whole grains by weight or have whole grains as the first ingredient* or
2. Have as the first ingredient* one of the non-grain main food groups: fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods (meat, beans, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, etc.) or
3. Be a combination food that contains at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit and/or vegetable or
4. Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of a nutrient of public health concern (i.e., calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber). *If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be one of items 2, 3 or 4

Special Events Snacks

Snacks served during the school day should make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and healthy beverages conforming to this policy. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations. A list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel and parents will be distributed by the food services director.

Rewards

We encourage non food forms of rewards. If food or beverage rewards are used for academic performance or good behavior, they should conform to this policy. We will not withhold beverages or food (including food served through meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations

Schools will evaluate their celebration practices that involve beverage and food during the school day. The food used in celebration practices should make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and healthy beverages conforming to this policy.

Monitoring

The Principal will ensure compliance with established school district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

- *the principal will ensure compliance with those policies

- *food service director will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within food service areas and will report on matter to the Principal

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI):

- * review findings and any resulting changes

- * the Principal will develop a summary report annually on compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies

- * the report will be provided to the School Improvement Advisory Committee and distributed to the school wellness committee

Policy Review

The Principal will review the nutrition and physical activity policies and practices and the provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity at the end of the school year. We will revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Policy Reviewed 4/6/2022