

St. Nicholas School Wellness Policy

On Physical Activity and Nutrition

Introduction:

Because children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive:

Because good health fosters student attendance and education;

Because obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Because heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Because only 2% of children (2 to 14 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Pyramid Guide;

Because community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Saint Nicholas School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of Saint Nicholas School:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary guidelines for Americans.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the

health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

- To the maximum extent practicable, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs (National School Lunch Program)
- School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

Our school will create, health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served in school:

School Meals

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

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;¹

¹ To the extent possible, school will offer vegetable and fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

³ A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the

- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,3}

Schools should engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals⁴.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes sitting down for lunch;
 - should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
 - should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
 - will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
 - will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
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Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Schools should discourage 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.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers , etc.)

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water or fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- A food item sold individually:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁶
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for

⁵ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

⁶ If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁷

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - One ounce for cookies;
 - Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
 - Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
 - Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
 - Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
 - The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of

school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Rewards. School will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,⁸ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. School should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Saint Nicholas School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. School should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, school gardens;
- 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 energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, or other foods, and nutrition-related community services;

Integrating Physical Activity:

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Therefore:

- Classroom 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;
- The school will offer multiple opportunities for a variety of extracurricular sports such as: volleyball, basketball, cross-country/track, and other activities such as dance and taekwondo.
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short stretch breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate.

Communications with Parents:

The school will support parents' efforts to provide healthy diet and physical education and other activities for their children. The school will make available nutrition information and nutrient information for lunch menus to parents. The school encourages parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and includes policies in the Student and Parent Handbook to reinforce these habits.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (PreK-8):

All students, including those with special needs receive the opportunity for weekly physical education lessons as well as daily activities. The physical education teacher is certified teacher and coach.

Daily Recess. All students have 20 minutes a day of supervised recess which is usually outside unless the weather does not allow.

Students are given stretch breaks during the day to encourage physical activity.

- **Physical Activity Opportunities After School.** The school offers multiple opportunities for a variety of extracurricular sports such as: volleyball, basketball, cross-country/track, and other activities such as dance and taekwondo.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The school will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal ensures compliance and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent as required.

School food service staff ensures compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will provide feedback to the school principal as necessary.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the school wellness policy, the principal, the food service staff, and the school nurse discussed options available for the development of such a policy.