

St. Mary's Schools
Wellness Policy
on
Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

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

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, 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;

Whereas, 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;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

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

Thus, the St. Mary's Schools is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of St. Mary's Schools that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

- All students in grades PreK-12 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 a 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 schools will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- Schools will provide health 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. Wellness Committee

St. Mary's School's will institute a Wellness Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. This committee also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. (The Wellness Committee will consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board (if possible), school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program 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;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals.

St. Mary's 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 meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as grab-and-go or classroom breakfast.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

Elementary and Jr.-Sr. High Schools:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
 - should schedule meal periods at appropriate times,
 - should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
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- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, the District will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools on an as-needed basis. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

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.

Provided Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc. will be discouraged)

Elementary School.

The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary school. 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.

Middle/Junior High and High School.

In middle/junior high and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those provided through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; 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:
 - o 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;
 - o will have no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars;
 - o 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 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).

Portion Sizes:

- Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:
 - o One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
 - o One ounce for cookies;
 - o Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
 - o Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
 - o Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;

- o Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
- o 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, to the greatest extent possible, school fundraising activities will not involve food. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

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.

Schools 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, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). To the greatest extent possible, foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will be nutritious.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion.

St. Mary's Schools aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition/health education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- 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, farm visits, and 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, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;

- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.

Toward that end:

- 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.

Communications with Parents.

The school will support parents efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Staff Wellness.

St. Mary's highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The schools Wellness Committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The Wellness committee should distribute its plan to the Board of Education annually.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12. All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education

Daily Recess.

All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Schools should discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School.

To the greatest extent possible, all three schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. To the greatest extent possible St. Mary's Schools will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

The Principal will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report monitoring school's compliance to the School Board

School food service staff, at the school will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the St. Mary's School Board and the Arch Diocesan Superintendent of Schools. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the school has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible. **(The State of Nebraska Conducts annual SMI visits).**

The Principal will develop a summary report every three years on school-wide compliance with the school's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from all stakeholders within the school. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to parent/teacher organization, school principal, and school health services personnel in the diocese.

Policy Review.

To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, the school will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of school assessments will be compiled by the school to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Adopted 10-16-06
St. Mary's Schools

Checklist for submitting your Wellness Policy
Due by: November 15, 2006

1. Return this completed form and a paper copy (front to back, if possible) of your Wellness Policy to:
Beverly Benes, PhD, RD
Assistant Director
NE Department of Education – Nutrition Services
301 Centennial Mall South
PO Box 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
2. In addition to the paper copy of your Wellness Policy, send an electronic copy as either a WORD file or in PDF format to Bev Benes at Bev.Benes@nde.ne.gov
3. If you have posted your School Wellness Policy on your District's website, provide the URL
(NOTE: *Section 204 Local Wellness Policy of Public Law 108-265 June 2004* does not require the Local Wellness Policy to be posted on the Local Education Agency websites)

Local Wellness Policy web address (URL): <http://www.esu8.org/~stmarys/school.html>

4. In accordance with Sec. 204 a) (4) Local Wellness Policy, "...Establishes a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of 1 or more persons within the local educational agency or at each school, as appropriate, charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the local wellness policy."

Provide the name and contact information of your Local Wellness Policy designee(s). Use the back of this page if you need more room.

Name: Norman Hale
Title: School Principal
School/
Facility: St Mary's Schools
Address: 326 E. Benton (elementary K-6)
300 N. 4th St. (Jr/High/Sr. High)
O'Neill, NE. 68763
Phone: (402) 336-2664 / (402) 336-4455
Email: <http://www.esu8.org/~stmarys/school.html>

5. To help plan for the training workshops in 2007, we would like to have your input on what assistance you need for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of your Wellness Policy. Please share your comments, suggestions, and questions for these workshops to be productive for you (use the back of this page if you need more room):

If questions, call Nutrition Services, Nebraska Department of Education at:
800-731-2233 (outside Lincoln, NE only) or 402-471-4620

The St. Mary's Schools Wellness Policy will be annually assessed by the Wellness Committee and approved by the School Board at the scheduled August meetings:

August 2007 Assessed and Approved Norm Hale

August 2008 Assessed and Approved Norm Hale

August 2009 Assessed and Approved Norm Hale

August 2010 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre

August 2011 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre

August 2012 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre

August 2013 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre

August 2014 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre

August 2015 Assessed and Approved Walt Dupre