

Wellness, Food and Beverage Policy

Rationale

Catholic Education has as its goal the total development of the individual as a responsible member of the family, the Catholic faith community and the global community in which we live. Good health is essential to wholesome growth through the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of the individual as well as the community.

A major theme of Catholic social teaching, *Human Dignity and Value of all Life*, carries the responsibility to care for the health and well-being of not only oneself, but of others. The concept of wellness is a core principle undergirding both health and physical activity.

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for healthy weight, are also linked to reduced risk for many chronic diseases. The schools of the Diocese of Cleveland, and the community itself, have a responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns.

Statement of Policy

The schools of the Diocese of Cleveland and Our Lady of Mount Carmel School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health and well-being. It is the policy that:

- All students in grades K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis and school staff will be encouraged to role model healthy eating behaviors;
- To the extent practicable, schools will participate in available school meal programs and students will be provided access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet their health and nutrition needs, while accommodating the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in a clean, safe and pleasant surrounding with adequate time to eat.
- Food or beverages sold or served throughout the school day will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations as well, as to the maximum extent possible, incorporate the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*;
- Schools will maintain a food safety program that is based on the principles of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Point Control Point (HACCP) system implemented with the intent of preventing food-borne illnesses.

Commitment to Nutrition

General

- Administer Child Nutrition Programs by school food service staff members that are properly qualified according to current professional standards.
- Offer school meal programs using the traditional meal pattern that meet the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.

- Encourage increased participation in the available federal Child Nutrition programs (e.g. school lunch, breakfast and milk programs).
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations based on Food Code requirements for licensed facilities.
- Encourage students to make healthy food choices by emphasizing menu options that feature baked items (will limit fried foods), whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables, and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Provide school food service staff routine professional development training opportunities.
- Follow USDA Child Nutrition Program regulations restricting competitive food sales and serving of foods of minimal nutritional value.
- Encourage school-based organizations to use non-food items and/or healthful foods for contests and fundraising programs.
- Ensure all foods made available on campus comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented as required by Child Nutrition Program regulations regarding school meals.
- Ensure water is available to students during mealtimes at no charge. If water fountains are not available in eating or adjacent readily accessible areas, water will be offered via other means such as pitchers coolers, etc.
- Monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students outside of the federally regulated child nutrition programs (i.e. vending, school stores, fundraising efforts) by school administration to ensure compliance with all local, state and federal statutes and regulations. Nutrient density and portion size will be considered before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students.

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 white milk, fat-free flavored milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (when required and to be defined by USDA); and
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Commitment to Physical Activity

- Provide physical education opportunities for all students in grades K-8.
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Create wider opportunities for students to voluntarily participate in extracurricular physical activity programs.

- Incorporate physical activity such as stretching before classes and at appropriate intervals during the day.
- If the schedule allows, provide for physical activity before the lunch period.
- Promote school wide challenges in conjunction with charitable events such as Walk for Diabetes or Hoops for Hearts.

Commitment to Health School Environment

- Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students.
- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.
- Promote healthy eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at school events. Ensure an adequate time for students to enjoy healthy foods with friends. Schools shall provide at least 10 minutes from the time the student sits down until the end of period to consume lunch. However, following the National Association of State Boards of Education recommendations, every effort will be made to provide students with 20 minutes after sitting down to eat lunch.
- Schedule meal periods at appropriate times with not less than three hours between breakfast and lunch. Lunchtime as near the middle of the school day as possible, preferably between 11 am and 1 pm.
- Make efforts to schedule recess for elementary grades before lunch so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat.
- Make available drinking fountains or other accessible drinking water in all schools so that students have access to water at meals and throughout the day.
- Refrain from using food as a reward or punishment for student behaviors.
- Avoid scheduling tutoring club/organizations meetings and other activities that interfere with appropriate mealtime allotments whenever possible. Activities that are scheduled during mealtimes should be structured to accommodate an appropriate mealtime for students.
- Annually before the beginning of the school year, review with staff and students the safety and crisis plans of the school.
- Review emergency procedures with parents.
- Update parent and faculty handbooks on a regular basis to reflect health and safety concerns.

Commitment to Implementation

- Conduct a review of the progress toward Health and Wellness Policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Review implementation of wellness policy in conjunction with the ongoing OCSAA accreditation process.