

STEPSTONE ACADEMY

Wellness Policy

With the passing of the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 by Congress, the School recognizes the role it can play in building nutrition knowledge and skills in children to promote healthy eating and physical activity choices. This law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health, and reduce childhood obesity.

The main goal of nutrition education is to influence student's eating behaviors. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to a reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity, and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The 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 the School that:

- 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 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 *Federal Smart Snack Guidelines*.
- The 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:

School Wellness Leadership

The School administrator, or appointed designee(s) with the requisite authority and responsibility, will facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy as appropriate, and will ensure the School's compliance with the policy. The School administrator /designee(s) will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy, including:

- Copy of the current wellness policy;
- Documentation on how the policy and assessments are made available to the public;
- The most recent assessment of implementation of the policy; and
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the policy, including who was involved in the process and how stakeholders were made aware of their ability to participate.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The School is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins by making the public aware of the wellness policy. The School will communicate ways the School community and the public can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy, including posting pertinent information on the School's website. The School will also inform parents of any improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards. The School may use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the School's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The School will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the School communicates important school information with parents. The School will notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

The School will only hire food and beverage vendors that provide school meals in accordance with Federal regulations for school meal nutritional standards. 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;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that all of the served grains are whole grain.

All foods available or provided to students during the School’s daily scheduled breakfast or lunch hours shall comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The School will not have any vending machines available for student use and will only advertise and promote nutritious foods and beverages on school grounds. The School will not sell to students any food or beverages that are not part of a reimbursable meal under the National School Lunch Act. All foods available to students in School programs or School sponsored events, other than the food service program, shall be served with consideration for promoting student health and well-being. Continuing professional development shall be provided for all staff of the food service program.

The School may 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, the School will make efforts to share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information may be made available on menus, the School’s Website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

In an effort to prevent food allergy emergencies, the School has adopted a “No Food Sharing” practice. This practice will not infringe on the food that parents provide for their own child. No Food Sharing means the following:

- No food or beverage sharing or trading during breakfast, lunch or snack
- No food or beverages are allowed on transportation provided by the School
- No unapproved food or beverages brought by parents/guardians, School staff, or community members for classroom celebrations
- The School will limit its use of food for classroom celebrations and rewards

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students and, if appropriate, the School administrator will review and consider evidence-based *Smarter Lunchroom* techniques and strategies on an annual basis.

The 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, 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;
 - placement of fruits and vegetables in easy to access locations (e.g., near cafeteria cashier or near the front of the line)
 - offers teachers samples of alternative reward options other than food or beverages
- 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;
- ensures students have access to hand-washing facilities prior to meals;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Staff Wellness. The School values the health and well-being of every staff member and will promote, plan, and implement activities, policies, and programs that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

The School will identify opportunities for physical activity to be incorporated into the school day. Such opportunities include the following:

- physical education provided to students as required by law and set forth in the Board approved curriculum;
- additional opportunities for physical activity including, but not limited to, breaks for the brain in the classroom are provided throughout the day

- access to breaks for physical activity shall not be used as a punitive tool by teachers

Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The School administrator will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. 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 School Leader.

Policy Review.

No less than once every three years, the School administrator will assess implementation of this Policy by reviewing policy compliance, assessing progress, and determining areas in need of improvement (the “Triennial Assessment”). As part of that Triennial Assessment, the School will also review its provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity, and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The School administrator will provide a report of each Triennial Assessment to the Board of Directors. This report will measure:

- the School’s implementation of this Policy,
- the extent to which the School’s Policy aligns with local model policies, and
- the progress made in attaining the goals of this Policy.

The School administrator is tasked with implementing recommendations made during review of a Triennial Assessment.

The School administrator will ensure that the School’s Wellness Policy and any Triennial Assessment is made available to the public on the School’s Website or upon request.