

DIOCESAN STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY

APRIL 2006

Belief Statement

The Diocese of Joliet is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Intent

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, including goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school based activities designed to promote students wellness; nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, students, school food service providers, the school board, school administrators, and the public in developing this policy.¹

Rationale

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk of the 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. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

Goals for Nutrition Education

- Students in preschool through grade 12 shall receive nutrition education. The program shall be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Special emphasis should be placed on nutrition education in preschool through the primary grades as eating habits are established at a young age.
- The nutrition education program shall include enjoyable interactive activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, field trips, school gardens, or other like activities.
- Schools shall work with parents to assist in providing a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children, which may include information to help the incorporate healthy eating and physical activity.

Goals for Physical Activity

- Students in preschool through grade 12 shall participate in regularly scheduled formal and informal physical activity programs. Special emphasis should be placed on promoting an active lifestyle in preschool through the primary grades as health habits are established at a young age. Reasonable accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities and/or other limitations.
- Elementary schools shall provide a daily, supervised recess period to students.
- Students shall be provided opportunities for physical activities through a range of school programs such as intramurals, interscholastic athletics, physical activity clubs or other like activities.

Goals for other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating

- It is recommended that food providers share information about the nutritional content of school meals and/or individually sold foods with students, family and school staff.
- School meals shall be served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for students to eat.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training and participate in activities or programs that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing and healthy school meals; nutrition education strategies including coordination of classroom and cafeteria activities; and effective promotional techniques to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Students, parents, school staff and community members bringing foods and beverages to school for parties/celebrations/meetings shall be encouraged to provide healthful options. (Attachment A provides suggestions.)
- Schools shall take efforts to promote nutritious food and beverage choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products.^{ii iii}
- All foods and beverages provided by the school shall comply with federal, state, and local food safety and sanitation regulations.

- Access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food on the school campus shall be limited to authorized personnel.

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Physical Activity

- Schools are encouraged to limit extended periods of inactivity. When activities such as mandatory testing make it necessary for students to be inactive for long periods of time, it is recommended that schools give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- Physical activity facilities and equipment on school grounds shall be safe.
- Schools are encouraged to work with the community to create a safe and supportive environment for students walking or biking to school.

Food or Physical Activity as a Reward or Punishment

- School personnel shall not withhold food or beverages from students as punishment.
- School personnel shall not withhold participation in physical education class as punishment.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods and Beverages Available on School Campuses During the School Day

- Food providers shall offer a variety of age-appropriate, appealing food and beverage choices and employ food preparation, purchasing and meal planning practices consistent with current Dietary Guidelines for Americans (e.g. provide a variety of fruits and vegetable choices; serve low-fat and fat-free dairy products; ensure that whole grain products are served).ⁱⁱ
- All foods and beverages sold individually (apart from the reimbursable school meal) shall be well-regulated and consistent with the nutritional goals of this policy. This includes:
 - a la carte offerings in the food service program;
 - food and beverage choices in vending machines, snack bars, school stores;
 - food and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities.
- Every effort shall be made to provide nutritious and appealing foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products, wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school.

Guidelines for School Meals

- School meals served shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.^{ii iv v}

Measuring Implementation & Community Involvement

- The diocesan superintendent or designee shall be charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that each school meets the wellness policy requirements.
- The principal of each campus shall be responsible for implementation of the wellness policy.
- Individual schools shall involve parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board (if applicable), school administrators, and the public to implement and continue development of the wellness policy. Their involvement shall include review of and listing on the individual school wellness checklist.
- The diocesan superintendent, based upon feedback from individual schools, may revise the wellness policy as appropriate.

Healthful Food and Beverage Options for School Functions *

At any school function (parties, celebrations, meetings, etc.) healthful food options should be made available to promote student, staff and community wellness. Examples of nutritious food and beverages that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans listed below.

- Raw vegetable sticks/slices with low-fat dressing or yogurt dip
- Fresh fruit wedges – cantaloupe, honey dew, watermelon, pineapple, oranges, tangelos, etc.
- Sliced fruit – nectarines, peaches, kiwi, star fruit, plums, pears, mangos, apples, etc.
- Fruit salad
- Cereal and low-fat milk
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Frozen fruit pops with fruit juice or fruit as the first ingredient
- Dried fruits – raisins, cranberries, apples, apricots
- Single serving applesauce or canned fruit in juice
- Peanut butter with apple wedges or celery sticks
- Fruit smoothies made with fat-free or low-fat milk
- Trail mix (dried fruits and nuts)
- Dry roasted peanuts, tree nuts and soy nuts (not coconut or palm nuts)
- Lean meats and reduced fat cheese sandwiches (use light or reduced fat mayonnaise in chicken/tuna salads)
- Party mix (variety of cereals, nuts, pretzels, etc.)
- Pretzels or reduced fat crackers
- Baked chips with salsa or low-fat dip (Ranch, onion, bean, etc.)
- Low-fat muffins (small or mini), granola bars and cookies (graham crackers, fig bars)
- Mini bagels with whipped light or fat-free cream cheese
- Pasta salad
- Bread sticks with marinara
- Fat-free or low-fat flavored yogurt & fruit parfaits
- Fat-free or low-fat pudding cups
- Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products (string cheese, single-serving cottage cheese, cheese cubes)
- Flavored soy milk fortified with calcium
- Pure ice cold water

** This list is not all-inclusive and is meant only to provide parents and school staff with guidance for healthier food and beverage choices.*

References

ⁱ Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 [Public Law 108-265, Sec. 204].
<http://thomas.loc.gov/bss>

ⁱⁱ Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005, Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Agriculture, 2005. www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines

ⁱⁱⁱ MyPyramid.gov, United States Department of Agriculture. www.mypyramid.gov

^{iv} Minimum School Meals Requirements – section 9(f)(1), 17(a) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(f)(1), 1766(a))

^v Minimum School Meals Requirements – subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779)