

WELLNESS POLICY

Purpose and Goals

Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. At St. Paul Lutheran School students are taught that their bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. God commands that we develop our talents to their potential. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being.

The prevalence of overweight children, aged 6-11 years, has more than doubled in the past 20 years and among adolescents, aged 12-19, has more than tripled. Healthy eating and physical activity are demonstrably linked to reduce risk for mortality and development of chronic disease as adults.

Although school health programs are not the only answer to this crisis in children's health, schools can foster an environment that is health-promoting and provides students with the knowledge and skills to create lifelong healthy habits. Children who eat well and are physically active are more likely to learn and become healthy, successful adults who contribute to our community.

Therefore, the goals of the policy of the school are to:

- Create a health-promoting environment in our school.
- Provide students' access to nutritious food.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity and developmentally appropriate physical education.
- Provide accurate information related to these topics through a comprehensive health education program.

The Principal shall develop and implement a comprehensive school-wide wellness program consistent with State and federal requirements in alignment with the criteria outlined by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The health and well-being of students is inextricably linked to academic success. The School Improvement Plan shall demonstrate its link through the inclusion of goals and measures included in this policy.

School Wellness Advisory Council

For the purpose of non-duplication and coordination of effort, the principal/school board shall establish a School Wellness Advisory Council. This Council will be composed of diverse members of the school community to include church staff, school staff, family members, a student representative, and members of the school community. The Council's purpose will be to oversee the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this policy. The Council may also recommend to the Principal and School Board approaches in both programs and policies to enhance the health and wellness of students, families, and staff.

The School Wellness Advisory Council shall regularly assess efforts across the school focused on improving student health and learning. Where possible, the Council will recommend policies and procedures to reduce duplication of these efforts, coordinate, and make efficient use of school resources and staff.

Health Care Plan

In an effort to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff and students, a Preparedness Plan and a Parent Health Toolkit have been created. In addition, cooperation with Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Association of Non-Public Schools and Tuscola County Health Department has been established for guidance on recent mandates, recommendations and requirements on health issues in the event of a wide-spread health epidemic. The Preparation Plan and Health Handbook may be found on St. Paul Lutheran's website.

Diversity Statement

The school acknowledges the link between disparities in health and academic achievement and the role this policy plays in mitigating these gaps. To this end, the adoption and implementation of this policy shall be carried out with respect for the diversity of the school's students, staff, and families. Programs and opportunities outlined in this policy shall be applied and accessed equitably regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, ability, gender, etc.

Nutrition

The school shall take a proactive effort to encourage students to make nutritious food choices. The Principal shall ensure that:

- A variety of healthy food choices are available whenever food is offered on school property or at school-sponsored events.
- School regulates the sale or serving of foods or snacks high in fat, sodium, or added sugars.
- All school meals and snacks served by the school nutrition and food services operation comply with State and federal laws and regulation.

Food Services Program

The school supports the philosophy of the National School Lunch and snack programs and shall provide wholesome and nutritious meals for children in the school. In addition, the school lunch program shall meet USDA School Meals Initiative standards for reimbursable meals.

The school food service staff will be trained annually to enable them to carry out the nutrition standards and federal rules required by the National School Lunch Program.

Free and Reduced Price Food Services

The school shall provide free and reduced- lunches to students according to the terms of the National School Lunch Program and the laws and rules of the State. The school shall inform parents of the eligibility standards for free and reduced price meals. Reasonable efforts shall be made to protect the identity of students receiving such meals. A parent has the right to appeal any decision with respect to his/her application for free or reduced price food services.

Nutrition Standards

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. The school shall provide lunches which meet the nutritional standards required by State and federal school lunch programs. Meals served in school before the end of the last lunch period shall conform to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The School Food Service Program shall also adhere to additional nutrition criteria established by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for school meals. Foods and beverages sold in competition with the federal school food programs (including a la carte) will be in compliance with the Healthier Generation Guidelines for School Competitive Foods and Beverages.

In accordance with what has become known as the "Smart Snack" rule, fundraisers that have a negative impact on the school meal program will not be allowed during meal periods. Any foods can be sold if school has been out of session for at least 30 minutes. Concession stands, candy sales, etc. are therefore allowable after a thirty-minute waiting period at the end of the school day.

Any vending machines installed on the premises of the school grounds shall be limited to only those that dispense items which are nutritionally healthful and meet the guidelines from the Alliance for Healthier Generation for school competitive foods and beverages and the USDA "All Foods Sold in School" Standards. No food or drink items shall be offered in vending machines unless they have been approved by the Principal.

These standards do not apply to school-sponsored or school-related bona fide fundraising activities that take place off school grounds and not in transit to and from school. Nor do they apply to booster sales at school-related events where parents and other adults are a significant part of an audience or are selling food as boosters either during intermission or immediately before or after such events. These school-related events frequently occur during evenings and weekends. Examples of these events include but are not limited to interscholastic sporting events, school plays, and music concerts.

Health Education and Nutrition Education

The health education curriculum is consistent with Michigan requirements and aligned to state/national health education standards. The curriculum provides opportunities for developmentally appropriate, skill-based instruction for Grades K-8. Instruction includes topics of healthy eating and benefits of physical activity.

Nutrition, health and fitness topics are integrated within the sequential, comprehensive health education curriculum taught at every grade level, Kindergarten through Grade 8, and coordinated with the school's nutrition and services operation.

Because good health is integral to a successful and productive future, education featuring information on healthy eating and physical activity is integrated where possible into other subject areas, in the cafeteria, and during before- and after-school activities.

School Employee Wellness

The health, safety, and attendance of school teachers and staff are critical to our students meeting the rigorous learning goals we have set. In addition, school staff members are a unique and valuable resource. To this end, the school has established a school employee wellness program that includes, but is not limited to, physical activity and nutrition information, weight management, stress management, health screening, tobacco cessation, and other evidence-based approaches. This program will be evaluated annually for its overall effect on staff health and well-being, staff attendance, and return on investment.

Implementation

Before the end of the school year, the School Wellness Advisory Council shall recommend to the Principal any revisions to the policy it deems necessary.

The Principal shall report annually to the Board of Christian Education on the progress of the School Wellness Advisory Council and on its evaluation of policy implementation and areas for improvement, including status of compliance and progress made in attaining goals of the policy.

The Principal is also responsible for informing stakeholders, including parents, students, and church members on the content and implementation of this policy. In order to inform the stakeholders, the Principal shall include information in the Student Handbook and post the policy on the school website, including the School Wellness Advisory Council assessment of the implementation of the policy.

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