

Sacred Heart School Wellness Policy on Nutrition and Physical Activity

Sacred Heart School strives to provide a well-rounded education for every child. This effort is reflected in both our Philosophy Statement and our school goals as listed below:

Philosophy Statement: Sacred Heart is a culturally diverse Catholic School where students and faculty share values and ideals in a disciplined community atmosphere of learning. The school fosters respect for self and others, personal responsibility, and service. The school offers opportunities for the growth and development of each student in all basic areas of life - spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical.

Goal: To provide a quality Catholic education which addresses the needs of the whole child.

Purpose and Goal: In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all school districts with a federally-funded school meals program develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity. Commonly called Section 204, it requires the development of a local school wellness policy.

Research shows that children and youth who begin each day as healthy individuals are better learners. Sacred Heart School promotes healthy children by supporting a school-wide wellness policy. This policy includes guidelines for nutrition education, physical activity, nutritional guidelines for all foods and beverages available at school and other school based activities. We believe that all students should possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy life-time choices.

School Wellness Advisory Committee

Sacred Heart School Wellness Advisory will help ensure that the policy directives are met and modified as needed in the future. The Advisory will work with the Parents, the Staff and the CUES Board to provide technical support in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

The Advisory Committee will be comprised of:

- Physical Education instructor
- Cafeteria Representative
- Administrative Team
- Student Service Coordinator
- Parent representative

This group will assist in forming goals and objectives, evaluating progress, identifying health resources within the community and modifying the policy to meet future needs.

Nutrition Education

“The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students’ eating behaviors. Schools will promote nutrition education throughout a students’ K-12 educational program. Nutrition education is incorporated into a variety of curriculum areas. These curriculum experiences provide the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices for a lifetime. “ 1 Health/Nutrition Education shall be offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, hands on learning based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health and provide life-long habits of good health.

Health/Nutrition Education will be integrated in all curricular areas including: math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.

Curriculum will include:

- Basic instruction based on the food pyramid based on the recommendations of the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, an organization of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, established in 1994 to improve the nutrition and wellbeing of Americans.
- Developmentally-appropriate activities which reinforce a healthy living style
- Promote 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
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing.
- Expose students to Internet activities and information about healthy life styles such as mypyramid.org

Physical Activity

“The primary goals are to offer opportunities for students to experience a variety of physical activities and to teach the value of a consistent fitness program for better health, academic success and general personal well being. Schools will promote opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day and during existing afterschool programs. Physical activity, health and fitness education are incorporated throughout a students’ K-12 educational program.” 1

Nutrition Standards

“Students’ lifelong health and nutritious eating habits are greatly influenced by the types and choices of foods and beverages available to them. School reimbursable meals meet the federal program requirements and nutrition standards. Staff will promote archdiocesan standards and provide information relative to foods and beverages sold or served to students outside of the school meal programs.” 1

Sacred Heart School will meet nutrition standards by:

- Serving lunches that meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- Engaging students in trying new foods sold through the school meal programs through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys on food preferences.
- Employing school food service staff that is properly qualified according to current professional standards and providing continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.
- Students and staff shall have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and shall have adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize.
- Cafeteria supervisory staff (teachers, aides, custodial staff, etc.) shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environments.
- Cafeteria facilities will provide for a physical and aesthetic surrounding that constitutes a healthy, safe, caring culture that maximizes the health of students and staff.
- School personnel 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.
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to food service staff and authorized personnel.
- Careful consideration should be given when scheduling tutoring, assemblies, organization meetings, classroom instruction, and other activities during meal times. Nutrition Quality Meals
- The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverages sold to all students in the lunch line.
- School lunches will be appealing and attractive to children.
- Lunches served will meet USDA guidelines which currently require no more than 30 percent of the total meal calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. The meal will also meet 1/3 of the daily requirement for protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories.

- According to the Federal Lunch Program, foods of minimal nutritional value are prohibited from being served or sold in the elementary schools. Foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by USDA include carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum, hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, taffy, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.
- Whether or not to allow food and beverages to be consumed in the classroom during the school day will be an administrative decision. If allowed, the Wellness Policy guidelines should be followed.
- Drinking fountains will be available for students to get water at meals and throughout the day.
- In order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, students will be offered a balanced breakfast through our school food program. Meal Times/Scheduling
- School administrators will make every attempt to provide at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time the student is seated, as outlined by the National Association of State Boards of Education.
- Class schedules should accommodate meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., ideally lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- Careful consideration of the school lunch environment should be taken into account when scheduling recess.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating.

Other School-Based Activities

“Schools are encouraged to promote school environments which provide consistent wellness messages that are conducive to healthy eating and being physically alive.

Classroom Rewards

Foods commonly used as rewards (such as candy, cookies, donuts, etc) can contribute to health problems for children, e.g. obesity and cavities. Food rewards provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices. Rewarding with food can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This teaches children to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating. Strong consideration should be given to using non-food rewards.

Classroom Celebrations

Sacred Heart School can help promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child. Every attempt should be made to serve healthy foods and beverages in age-appropriate portions during classroom celebrations.

School Fundraising

Raising money presents a constant challenge for all schools. Sacred Heart School fundraisers help to pay for computers, field trips, athletics, and other programs that educate and enrich young lives – important programs that are not always covered by the school budget. Fundraisers should make every effort to include healthy alternatives. Education needs to play an active role in this planning. In order to educate the individuals that are responsible for the planning and selection of items to be sold through these fundraisers, the Wellness Advisory Council will be available to assist these groups as to possible healthy alternatives. Every effort should be made to explore and incorporate healthy foods into the fundraising process as well as to explore non-food alternatives.

Health Services

Health services will be provided for all students in a school setting to assess, protect, and promote health; to provide services in harmony with community, parents, and other constituencies and to ensure all students have access to services. Sacred Heart School has an array of comprehensive health and wellness services that are provided by the school staff, community partners, and a partnership with Heart Ministry Center that focuses on relieving stress in adults and children. Parents will be educated and informed of the availability and variety of health services for their children.

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.

Daily Recess

All Sacred Heart students, K-6 will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised but unstructured recess, preferably outdoors, during which supervising staff should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. School staff 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, staff should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active. Staff as Role Models School staff should model healthy eating behaviors and engage in physical activity on a consistent basis.

Communication with Parents

- Sacred Heart School will support parent's efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children
- Sacred Heart School will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks.
- Sacred Heart School teachers encouraged to 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 could include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals.

Sacred Heart School 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.

Marketing Products on Campus

Long-term wellness requires significant public-private participation and should be encouraged. Therefore, partnerships between Sacred Heart School and businesses is encouraged and appropriate business sponsorship of educational activities that promote educational well-being of students is encouraged. However, such partnerships should not be designed to threaten the health, wellness, and physical well-being of the child. If for medical reasons a student cannot adhere to the guidelines in the Sacred Heart School Wellness Policy, a written request for exemption should be submitted to the School Office. A care plan will be developed to meet that student's individual needs and appropriate staff will be informed of the necessary accommodations.

Monitoring and Policy Review Monitoring

The school administration, faculty, and the Wellness Committee will ensure compliance with nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the committee upon review. The wellness policy committee will develop a summary report every three years on the compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from faculty staff and students. That report will be posted on the school web site.

Policy Review

To help with the initial development of the Sacred Heart School wellness policy, the wellness committee will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of those assessments will be compiled 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 will review the 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 wellness committee, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

1 From the Archdiocese of Omaha Wellness Policy guidelines.

(updated 8/2017)