

SWP-1 STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY

Schools play a critical role in promoting student health, preventing childhood obesity, and combating problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity. The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Erie are committed to providing students with a healthy school environment that maximizes individual growth and development. The link between student health and academic achievement motivates the Diocese of Erie to provide a comprehensive wellness program.

The Wellness Policy has well-defined measurable goals:

- Engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other community members in developing, implementing, and monitoring Diocesan-wide nutrition and physical activity policies
- Maximize nutritional and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity that promote overall health and wellbeing

The Wellness Policy also includes:

- Periodic assessment tools to gauge how effectively student needs are being addressed
- Periodic updates to keep the policy current
- Feedback opportunities for all policy stakeholders

The Wellness Policy provides overviews, goals, implementation suggestions, and an assessment tools to gauge each school's success in addressing student needs. The Diocesan Wellness policy is available for the public to view via the Catholic Schools Office website, www.eriecd.org/schools.htm at the link for Parent Resources.

The Diocesan Wellness Committee (DWC) will serve as a resource to schools for implementing the Wellness Policy. This committee will consist of parents, students, school food authorities, school administrators, Physical Education teachers, and school health professionals.

Each school administrator will appoint a committee to oversee the implementation of the Student Wellness Policy in the school. This committee will be referred to as the Local Wellness Committee (LWC). The job of the LWC is to use the School Wellness Index to identify areas for development in the school. Based on the results of the School Wellness Index, the LWC will identify 2 or 3 goals that the school will address during the academic year. The LWC will provide periodic feedback to the administration, faculty, staff, students, and parents using newsletters (hard copy or electronic), parent broadcast announcements, and/or periodic meetings.

NUTRITION EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND GOALS

Nutrition Education constitutes an important component of the Student Wellness Policy. To make healthy nutritional choices, students must have knowledge, skills, and opportunities to make those choices. Nutrition Education includes any learning experience designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of food and drink choices and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.

The primary goal of the Nutrition Education component is to influence students' food and drink selections. Additionally, Nutrition Education will reinforce lifelong balance by emphasizing the link between caloric intake and exercise in ways that are appropriate.

Nutrition Education at all levels will:

- Be offered as part of an integrated curriculum
- Be sequential, comprehensive, and standards based
- Be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Include developmentally appropriate events that promote good nutritional habits
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low fat and fat free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods

NUTRITION PROMOTION OVERVIEW AND GOALS

Nutrition promotion attempts to positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages. Promotion of healthy eating is also carried out through an environment that encourages healthy nutrition choices.

Nutrition Promotion at all levels will:

- Provide parents resources about health and nutrition to encourage healthy meals for their children.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate student projects that relate to nutrition.
- Consistent nutrition messages shall be displayed throughout the classrooms, cafeteria and school assembly areas.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The Physical Activity component is another essential component of the Student Wellness Policy. The benefits of physical activity include improved self-esteem and feelings of well-being, increased fitness levels, lower rates of chronic disease, and enhanced flexibility, muscle strength, and endurance. It is recommended that children engage in 60 minutes of moderate physical activity each day.

The primary goal of the Physical Activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills specific for physical activity. Additionally, the Physical Activity component will help maintain physical fitness and ensure that all students regularly participate in physical activity. A comprehensive Physical Activity program includes physical education, recess, and before and after school programs.

Physical Activity Education at all levels will:

- Be offered as part of an integrated curriculum
- Be sequential, comprehensive, and standards based
- Be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Include developmentally appropriate activities that promote academic achievement, and contribute to the recommended 60 minutes a day of physical activity for all children

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS/BEVERAGES AT SCHOOL

SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND GOALS

All foods served at schools in the Diocese of Erie will contribute to the overall health and well-being of the students. The meals and snacks offered to students will provide a healthy, balanced nutritional program.

Meals and snacks at all schools will:

- Contain no more than 30 percent of total calories from fat
- Consists of fresh fruits and vegetables daily in each meal
- Include only one percent and nonfat milk options
- Offer whole grains and introduce new whole grain products as they become available
- Occasionally include food items selected by students and parents through taste testing, community meetings, and surveys
- Served in clean, safe, and pleasant environments
- Provide an appropriate amount of time for lunch and breakfast. *

*Schools will, to the extent possible, operate a School Breakfast Program.

COMPETITIVE FOOD OVERVIEW AND GOALS

All food and beverages sold or served to students in schools must comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines (including vending and ala carte items). These include any foods that are served in classrooms and any foods offered at school-sponsored events.

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day shall offer healthy alternatives in addition to the more traditional fare.

Competitive foods are defined as foods and beverages offered or sold to students on school campus during the school day, which are not part of the reimbursable school breakfast or lunch.

- For purposes of this policy, **school campus** means any area of property under the jurisdiction of the school that students may access during the school day.
- For purposes of this policy, **school day** means the period from midnight before school begins until thirty (30) minutes after the end of the official school day.

All competitive foods sold outside of the school meal must comply with the federal Smart Snacks in School nutrition guidelines.

The following items will not be offered as part of the school breakfast or lunch program.

- Foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV) as defined by the USDA regulations, including:
 - All food and beverage items listing sugar in any form as the first ingredient
 - All food containing trans fat
- All sodas and sugar based drinks

Sold Competitive Foods

Fundraising activities held during the school day involving the sale of competitive foods shall be limited to foods that meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless an exemption is approved by the Director of Curriculum. Up to five exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings, and up to ten exempt fundraisers in high school buildings are permitted.

Exempt fundraisers are fundraisers in which competitive foods are available for sale to students that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. To request an exemption, the school must complete a Fundraiser Exemption Approval form and submit it two weeks prior to the event to the Director of Curriculum. (Appendix SWP-1-A) An e-mail approving the exemption will then follow. Even though an exemption has been granted, the food and beverage items may not be sold during the breakfast or lunch meal time.

Non-sold Competitive Foods

Food and beverages shall not be used as a reward or incentive in schools. A list of suggested non-food rewards to offer as an alternative to food rewards is available at the Catholic Schools Office website / Teacher Resources. Non-sold competitive foods available to students, which may include but are not limited to foods and beverages offered as rewards and incentives, at classroom parties and celebrations, or as shared classroom snacks, shall meet the following guidelines:

1. **Rewards and Incentives:** Foods and beverages shall not be used as a reward for classroom or school activities unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message.
2. **Classroom Parties and Celebrations:** Classroom parties shall offer a minimal amount of foods (maximum of three items) containing added sugar as the primary ingredient (e.g. cupcakes, cookies) and will provide the following:
 - Fresh fruits/vegetables; and
 - Water, 100 % juice, 100 % juice diluted with water, low-fat milk or nonfat milk.

Marketing

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). Marketing applies to logos/verbiage on vending machines, posters, trash cans, cups used for beverage dispensing and similar types of items. Existing contracts should be reviewed and modified to the extent possible. Marketing does not apply to personal clothing or other items brought from home or educational tools.

MEASUREMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Measurement, assessment, and evaluation will be an integral part of ensuring the adoption and implementation of the Student Wellness Policy guidelines. The Director of Curriculum will be the designee to ensure compliance at the school level.

The LWC will monitor the implementation of the Student Wellness Policy, execute a plan for evaluating its effectiveness, and report to the school principal, parents, and/or the community the status of implementing the plan. The committee will utilize the School Wellness Index and other sources of data to identify priority areas and to monitor improvements in those areas. (Appendix SWP – 1-B) The committee will ensure that the school provides families with information about school and community nutrition education and physical activity opportunities. The committee will report to the Diocesan Wellness Committee on an annual basis with results of the School Wellness Index.

Every three years the Wellness policy will be assessed as to its effectiveness in meeting the established goals. This triennial assessment shall include:

1. The extent to which each school follows laws and policies related to wellness.
2. The extent to which this policy compares to model wellness policies and
3. A description of the progress made by the diocesan schools in attaining the goals of this policy.

The Diocesan Wellness Committee will make this assessment available to the public. The Wellness Policy will be reviewed and updated after the assessment is complete.

SCHOOL WELLNESS INDEX

The School Wellness Index is an assessment tool. (Appendix SWP-1-B) Periodic use of the School Wellness Index helps schools determine if they are meeting the goals of the Student Wellness Policy.

The School Wellness Index is divided into 4 categories with goal statements relating to each of the 4 categories. The four areas included in the School Wellness Index are Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, School Meals and Competitive Foods. The use of an implementation key indicates the level of compliance with the stated goal.

The Implementation Key is as follows:

- 1 Consistently meets and exceeds goal
- 2 Consistently meets goal
- 3 Needs work to meet goal

Areas that contain “3” indicate a need for extra attention by the Local Wellness Committee to comply with the Student Wellness Policy and maximum health benefits for all students.

RECORD KEEPING

It is the responsibility of the Director of Curriculum to maintain the following records on an annual basis:

1. Current Diocesan Wellness Policy
2. Meeting agenda and minutes of the Diocesan Wellness Committee’s meetings
3. Evidence of annual public notification of content of the Wellness policy
4. Evidence of compliance with the community involvement requirements
5. Evidence of the triennial assessment

OTHER SCHOOL BASED ACTIVITIES

In addition to the school-based activities on the Wellness Index, regular professional development will be provided to all applicable groups including School Food Service Staff. Furthermore, because faculty and staff need to model positive health behaviors, ongoing wellness opportunities will be offered to the staff. Some suggestions for offerings include:

- Workshops and presentations on health promotion
- Educational resources that encourage healthy lifestyles, prevent injury, and reduce chronic stress
- Fitness opportunities such as walking clubs, fitness challenges, and before and after school programs such as aerobics, and healthy eating groups
- In-service programs outlining the Student Wellness Policy