

# **St. Michael School Wellness Policies on**

## **Physical Activity and Nutrition**

### **Preamble**

St. Michael School recognizes that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity are essential for students to optimize their physical and mental health and achieve their full academic potential. Research indicates that obesity, malnutrition and subsequent diseases are largely preventable through healthy eating habits and regular physical activity. Schools, parents and the community share the responsibility in promoting healthy eating habits and encouraging physically active lives amongst young people.

Thus, St. Michael 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 St. Michael School that:

1. The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
2. All students in grades K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
3. St. Michael School will develop and implement nutrition standards that provide healthy food choices in the school environment. The key focus of these standards is to improve the nutritional value of foods offered to students in the school setting and reduce the calories, sugar and fat made available to students.
4. Qualified professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; and will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
5. To the maximum extent practical, St. Michael School will participate in available federal school meal programs.
6. St. Michael 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:

### I. School Health Councils

St. Michael School will create, strengthen or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.

### II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

#### School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Programs will:

1. be appealing and attractive to children
2. be served in clean and pleasant settings
3. meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations
4. offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
5. serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk
6. ensure that 100% of the served grains are whole grain.

Schools should 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, schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals-** Schools 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-priced meals. Toward this end, schools may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students.

**Meal Times and Scheduling-** Schools:

1. will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch
2. should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
3. should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;

4. will provide student's access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks
5. should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff-** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages-** Schools 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.

**Foods and Beverages Sold Individually** (*i.e.* foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria ala carte (snack) lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

**Elementary School-** The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

**Middle/Junior High School-** In middle/junior high school, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through ala carte [snack] lines, vending machines, student stores, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

**Beverages-**

- A. 100% fruit juice plain or carbonated, with or without added water, but no added sweeteners, 12oz maximum
- B. Water, no portion size limit
- C. Low fat and non-fat milk, 12oz maximum
- D. Non-fat flavored milk, 12oz maximum
- E. Flavored water artificially sweetened are not permitted
- F. No calorie beverages flavored and/or carbonated are not permitted
- G. Sport drinks are not permitted

Beverages will be dispensed in re-sealable plastic bottles whenever possible.

**Foods-**

Food items sold individually will:

- A. Have 200 calories or less
- B. Have no more than 35% of its calories from fat
- C. Have no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat
- D. Contain no trans fat
- E. Contain no more than 35g of sugar by weight
- F. Contain no more than 230 mg of sodium

Please use the smart snack calculator found at this link to help in determining if a snack meets the guidelines:

[https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take\\_action/schools/snacks\\_and\\_beverages/smart\\_snacks/alliance\\_product\\_calculator](https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/smart_snacks/alliance_product_calculator)

**Fundraising Activities During School-** When a fundraising event involves food that will be consumed on campus, the food must meet the nutrition standards. The nutrition standards do not have to be met when:

- a. A fund-raiser has food as minimal and secondary part of the event; or
- b. The food being sold is not intended for consumption on the school site

**After School and Weekend Events-** The nutrition standards do not apply to food and beverages provided at after school functions such as art, drama, music and athletic events.

All groups will be encouraged to examine foods and beverages served and sold in order to continue to improve the quality and nutritional content being provided.

**Snacks-** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snack based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations.

**Rewards-** Food is discouraged from being used as a classroom reward or incentive. If used as an incentive, however, foods or beverages must meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). If incentives are included in a student's IEP, food may be used if all other options have been exhausted. Food and beverages will not be withheld (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

**Celebrations-** When food and/or other beverages are offered to students in school or at classroom functions, healthy food options are preferred and should be available. It is also

preferred that classroom parties and celebrations be held after the classroom lunch period to help ensure students eat a nutritious lunch.

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion-** St. Michael School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- A. 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
- B. 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
- C. Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens
- D. Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices
- E. Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise)
- F. Links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services
- G. Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing
- H. Includes training for teachers and other staff

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting-**for students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class.

Toward that end:

1. Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television
2. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons
3. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Communication with Parents-** The school will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will send home nutrition information,

post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

The school will 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 will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events or physical education homework.

**Food Marketing in Schools-** School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion.

**Staff Wellness-** St. Michael School highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

#### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**Daily Physical Education-** All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle school students) for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess-** all elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferable outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Schools 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, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

**Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School-** All elementary and middle schools will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All middle schools as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. Schools

will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities and students with special health-care needs. After-school childcare and enrichment programs will provide and encourage-verbally and through the provision of space, equipment and activities-daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

**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.

## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

The principal or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the principal.