

Diocese of Dallas Model Wellness Plan

Purpose and Goal

There is a well-documented link between nutrition and learning: healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Schools have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns, to reduce childhood obesity, and to make nutritious and enjoyable food choices. In addition, school staff is encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

Classroom Nutrition Education

Includes standards and curriculum set forth by The Texas Department of Agriculture and Square Meals. With sequential health education taught or supervised by qualified teachers. Nutrition education will demonstrate the interrelationship between good nutrition, physical activity, and health. Staff development is available at the local Education Service centers for teachers and food service staff on basic nutrition and nutrition education.

- Schools are encouraged to use food as an integrator of education about human events, history, and celebrations, and shall encourage classes to use food and cooking as part of a learning experience that sheds light on customs, history, traditions, and cuisine of various countries and cultures.
- Whenever possible, schools shall as a part of the core curriculum integrate hands-on experiences in gardens, in kitchens, and on field trips teaching students how food reaches the table and the implications that has for their health and future.
- Promoting healthy eating habits can be accomplished by encouraging students to eat the balanced school breakfast/lunch provided to them and guiding the students not to overeat.
- Students should be mindful about wasting food and encouraging them to remember there are children in their own neighborhoods, around our country, and the world who do not have enough to eat.
- Inviting a local "chef" to school is another avenue that can be explored in school communities; to have them share their knowledge and skills with students and encourage the students to take an active interest in food, production and preparation, and selection of healthy foods for them to lead productive and healthy lives.
- Healthy menus can be developed by students and teachers in the classroom and shared with their school community and family while promoting healthy decision making regarding their food choices.

Physical Activity

Schools shall provide a quality physical education program that meets the requirements set forth by Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Education Department and the individual Diocese for each grade level. Schools are encouraged to institute programs for students to participate in that support physical activity in and out of school. Participation in the President's Physical Fitness program is recommended for schools. Recess periods are provided during the school day in which physical activity is encouraged and promoted. The schools should provide balls, jump ropes, and other equipment to facilitate and encourage students to exercise while they play.

Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, as defined by federal regulation, Square Meals: (FMNV)

Are not allowed to be provided to students anytime, anywhere on school premises by anyone until after the end of the last scheduled class of the school day. (Including guest speakers)

Soda water. Includes any carbonated beverage, including those added nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and protein.

Water ices. Includes any frozen, sweetened water such as popsicles and other "...sicles" and flavored ice with the exception of products that contain fruit or fruit juice.

Chewing gum. Includes any flavored products made from natural or synthetic gums and other ingredients that form an insoluble mass for chewing.

Certain Candies. Includes any processed food made predominantly from sweeteners or artificial sweeteners, including hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy and candy-coated popcorn.

Nutrition policy exemptions

Elementary classrooms may serve one nutritious snack per day in the morning or afternoon, (not during regular meal periods for that class) under the teacher's guidance. The classroom snack may be provided by the school food service, the teacher, parents or other groups and should be at no cost to students. Prepackaged snacks must comply with the fat and sugar limits of the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy and must be single-size servings. All snacks, (homemade and prepackaged) may not contain any FMNV's or consist of candy or dessert type items (cookies, cakes, cupcakes, pudding, ice cream or frozen desserts, etc.) However, this does not apply to snacks students bring from home solely for their own consumption.

Elementary Classroom Birthday Parties that includes foods otherwise restricted by the policy are permitted at student birthday parties. It is recommended such parties be scheduled after the end of the class lunch period so that these celebrations will not replace a nutritious lunch.

The nutrition policy does not apply to students who leave campus for campus-approved field trips or to travel to sanctioned athletic, band, or other competitions. The school day is considered to have ended for these students. School activities, athletic functions, etc. that occur after the normal school day are not covered by the policy.

Certain exemptions are allowed for school nurses, students with special needs, and up to three school wide events preapproved by campus officials. (NOTE: Federal regulations do not allow FMNV's to be sold or given away during meal periods where reimbursable meals are served/consumed, including during any exempted events.)

Nutritional Standards for All Foods Sold in School: Guidance for School Principals and Staff

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act required the USDA to establish nutrition standards for competitive food sold in schools. USDA's interim final "Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School," was effective July 1, 2014. These science-based nutrition standards promote healthy school environment and apply to all foods sold outside of the reimbursable school nutrition program meals, such as:

- A la carte cafeteria sales
- Snack bars
- Fundraisers
- School stores
- Vending machines

Definitions

- **Competitive food** – All food and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day, other than those meals reimbursable under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.
- **School campus** – All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that is accessible to students during the school day
- **School day** – The period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day
- **A La Carte** – Menu items sold individually and, therefore, not part of the school nutrition program's reimbursable meals
- **Fundraisers:** Schools may use foods and beverages that meet the competitive foods standards to raise funds for schools sponsored events, clubs, and activities. These standards do not apply to items sold off-campus or during non-school hours. Schools may adopt stricter standards through their Local School Wellness Policy. Fundraisers for food and beverage items that do not meet Smart Snacks **may not** occur at any time during the school day. Parent organizations and

extracurricular groups that wish to sell foods or beverages for fundraising purposes should be appraised of these standards.

- **Beverages:** Allowable beverages for all grades include plain water, low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored), nonfat milk (flavored and unflavored), and 100% fruit and /or vegetable juice. Although federal regulation allows High schools the additional flexibility to sell other flavored and/or carbonated diet and low-calorie beverage, including those that contain caffeine, the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy does not currently allow carbonation of any kind. Additional state regulations are forthcoming to further clarify beverage requirements.

Record-Keeping

Schools must keep accurate documentation of compliance with the Smart Snacks rule and in accordance with the TCCBED retention policy. Compliance will be determined during the time of the district's Administrative Review.

A Team Approach:

These nutrition standards extend beyond the scope of the school food service operation. It is important for school leadership and staff to partner alongside school nutrition professionals in order to communicate information about the new standards, as well as develop a plan to ensure compliance.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

<http://www.squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/SmartSnacks.aspx>

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_childadultmealstandards.pdf

Menu templates

Monthly menu templates are available with nutrition education and activities for students at: <http://www.squaremeals.org/>

Annual Civil Rights Education

Annual Civil Rights training is required for all Contracting Entities reimbursed with federal funding from the United States Government. Under federal law, anyone implementing or overseeing a USDA nutrition program is required to take this annual training. The Civil Rights training is to keep us aware of our responsibilities such as how to treat program applicants and participants, the process for filling complaints, etc. This includes any paid or unpaid staff such as volunteers or interns who has dealings with the public. Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA's) role is to ensure compliance and enforcement of the prohibition against discrimination of all TDA administered USDA nutrition programs.

Measure and Evaluation

Wellness policy shall be reviewed annually by the Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Dallas.

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Approved by -

Committee members on November 13, 2019