

School Wellness Policy

Nutritional Development Services (NDS) recognizes that student wellness, proper nutrition, and regular physical activity are related to a student's physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. It also believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, and developmental success we need to create an environment in which students can learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices.

NDS is committed to providing a safe, health-promoting school environment that promotes these concepts as part of the education of the whole child. Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7}

Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines Nutritional Development Services approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Within this School Wellness Policy, goals are included to ensure:

- Students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day-both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus-in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards.
- Students receive nutrition education, that helps to develop lifelong healthy eating habits.
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school.
- Students engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school.
- Establishes nutrient standards for all food available on the school campus with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of wellness in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
- NDS establishes and maintains management, oversight, communication about, and monitoring of the policy by measuring and evaluating its established goals.

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The Executive Director or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy to ensure each school's programs and curriculum is compliant with this policy, related policies and established guidelines or administrative regulations.

Each building Principal or designee shall annually report to the Executive Director or designee regarding compliance in his/her school.

Staff members responsible for programs related to school wellness shall report to the Executive Director or designee regarding the status of such programs. NDS strongly encourages multiple staff to be involved in the wellness committee at the school level, including nurses, physical education teachers, Dietitians, and any other staff interested in improving the wellness culture.

- The Executive Director or designee shall annually report to the School Wellness Committee on schools' compliance with law and policies related to school wellness. The report may include:
- Review of all foods and beverages sold in schools for compliance with established nutrition guidelines.
- Listing of activities and programs conducted to promote nutrition and physical activity.
- Recommendations for policy and/or program revisions.
- Suggestions for improvement in specific areas.
- Feedback received from school staff, students, parents/guardians, community members and the Wellness Committee.

The Executive Director or designee and the established Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment at least once every three (3) years on the contents and implementation of this policy as part of a continuous improvement process to strengthen the policy and ensure implementation. This triennial assessment shall be made available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner and include:

1. The extent to which each school is in compliance with law and policies related to school wellness.
2. The extent to which this policy compares to model wellness policies.
3. A description of the progress made by NDS in attaining the goals of this policy.

At least once every three (3) years, NDS shall update or modify this policy as needed, based on the results of the most recent triennial assessment and/or as school and community needs and priorities change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information and technologies emerge; and new

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federal or state guidance or standards are issued.

NDS shall annually inform and update the public, including parents/guardians, students and others in the community, about the contents, updates and implementation of this policy via schools website, student handbooks, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods. This annual notification shall include information on how to access the School Wellness Policy; information about the most recent triennial assessment; information on how to participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the School Wellness Policy; and a means of contacting Wellness Committee leadership.

Recordkeeping

NDS shall retain records documenting compliance with the requirements of the School Wellness Policy, which shall include:

1. The written School Wellness Policy.
2. Documentation demonstrating that NDS has informed the public, on an annual basis, about the contents of the School Wellness Policy and any updates to the policy.
3. Documentation of efforts to review and update the School Wellness Policy, including who is involved in the review and methods used by schools to inform the public of their ability to participate in the review.
4. Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the School Wellness Policy and notification of the assessment results to the public.

Wellness Committee

NDS shall establish a Wellness Committee comprised of, but not necessarily limited to, at least one (1) of each of the following: school administrator(s), school board member, food service representative, student, parent/guardian, school health professional, physical education teacher and member of the public.

The Wellness Committee shall serve as an advisory committee and shall be responsible for developing, implementing and periodically reviewing and updating a School Wellness Policy to recommend to NDS for adoption.



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School-based committee:

NDS strongly encourages a wellness committee at the school level, which should include staff and administration interested in, or working directly in the wellness arena. Staff can include, but is not limited to nurses, dietitians, physical education teachers, athletic directors, coaches, teachers, and administration.

Nutrition Education

The primary goal of nutrition education, which may be defined as “any set of learning experiences designed to facilitate the voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition- related behaviors conducive to health and well-being,” (AND 1996) is to influence students’ eating behaviors.

- Nutrition education in schools shall teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by students. Promoting student health and nutrition enhances readiness for learning and increases student achievement.
- Nutrition education shall provide all students with the knowledge and skills needed to lead healthy lives.
- Nutrition education lessons and activities shall be age-appropriate and shall teach behavior-focused skills, which may include menu planning, reading nutrition labels and media awareness.
- Lifelong lifestyle balance shall be reinforced by linking nutrition education and physical activity.

Schools are encouraged to implement the following Nutrition Education standards:

- School food service and nutrition education classes shall cooperate to create a learning laboratory.
- Integrate nutrition education into other subjects such as math, science, language arts and social sciences to complement but not replace academic standards based on nutrition education.
- The staff responsible for providing nutrition education shall be properly trained and prepared and shall participate in appropriate professional development.
- Nutrition education shall extend beyond the school environment by engaging and involving families and the community.



NUTRITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

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- Incorporate various cultural experiences into the school day, including educational celebrations and assemblies related to food and food experiences around the world.
- Participate in culturally-appropriate food holidays, including Lent (meatless Fridays), and other food holidays important to the student population.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs.

- School staff shall cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide opportunities for appropriate student projects related to nutrition.
- Consistent nutrition messages shall be disseminated and displayed throughout schools, schools, classrooms, cafeterias, homes, community and media.
- Schools shall offer resources about health and nutrition to encourage parents/guardians to provide healthy meals for their children.

Schools are encouraged to implement the following Nutrition Promotion strategies:

- Consistent nutrition messages shall be demonstrated by avoiding use of unhealthy food items in classroom lesson plans and school staff avoiding eating less healthy food items in front of students.
- Schools shall promote nutrition through the implementation of activities where possible. Activities may include, but not be limited to, the initiation/maintenance of school gardens, taste testing of location products in the cafeteria and classroom, classroom education about local agriculture and nutrition, and field trips to local farms.

Physical Activity

- Schools shall strive to provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day for all students.
- Schools shall contribute to the effort to provide students opportunities to accumulate at least



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sixty (60) minutes of age-appropriate physical activity daily, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Opportunities offered at school will augment physical activity outside the school environment, such as outdoor play at home, sports, etc.

- A physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students shall be maintained.
- Physical activity shall not be used or withheld as a form of punishment.

Schools are encouraged to implement the following Physical Activity standards:

- Students shall participate daily in a variety of age-appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness and performance benefits.
- Age-appropriate physical activity opportunities, such as outdoor and indoor recess, before and after school programs, during lunch, clubs, intramurals and interscholastic athletics, shall be provided to meet the needs and interests of all students, in addition to planned physical education.
- Extended periods of student inactivity, two (2) hours or more, shall be discouraged.
- Physical activity breaks shall be provided for students during classroom hours.
- Before and/or after-school programs shall provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for participating children.
- Schools shall partner with parents/guardians and community members and organizations, such as YMCAs, Boys & Girls Clubs, local and state parks, hospitals, etc., to institute programs that support lifelong physical activity.
- NDS strongly encourages the entire student body to participate in physical activity and athletic events as a school-wide and inter-school collaboration.

Physical Education

Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements for graduation are determined by the specific local district. Therefore, physical education requirements are not included, however, NDS strongly encourages the following:



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- Quality physical education instruction that promotes lifelong physical activity and provides instruction in the skills and knowledge necessary for lifelong participation shall be provided.
- A comprehensive physical education course of study that focuses on providing students the skills, knowledge and confidence to participate in lifelong, health-enhancing physical activity shall be implemented.
- Students shall be moderately to vigorously active as much time as possible during physical education class. Documented medical conditions and disabilities shall be accommodated during class.

Other School Based Activities

- Safe drinking water shall be available and accessible to students, without restriction and at no cost to the student, at all meal periods.
- Nutrition professionals who meet hiring criteria established by the school and in compliance with federal regulations shall administer the school meals program. Professional development and continuing education shall be provided for school nutrition staff, as required by federal regulations.
- Students shall be provided a clean and safe meal environment.
- Schools shall implement alternative service models to increase school breakfast participation where possible, such as “grab & go breakfast” and breakfast after first period to reinforce the positive educational, behavioral and health impacts of a healthy breakfast.
- Schools shall provide appropriate training to all staff on the components of the School Wellness policy.
- Fundraising projects submitted for approval shall be supportive of healthy eating and student wellness.
- Meal periods shall be scheduled at appropriate hours, as required by federal regulations and as defined by individual schools.
- Students shall have access to hand washing or sanitizing.
- Access to the food service operation shall be limited to authorized staff.



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- Administrators, teachers, food service personnel, students, parents/guardians and community members shall be encouraged to serve as positive role models through school programs, communications and outreach efforts.
- NDS shall support the efforts of parents/guardians to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for children by communicating relevant information through various methods.

Schools are encouraged to implement the following best practices:

- Students shall be provided adequate time to eat: ten (10) minutes sit down time for breakfast; twenty (20) minutes sit down time for lunch.
- Goals of the School Wellness policy shall be considered in planning school-based activities.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods/Beverages at School

- All foods and beverages available in schools during the school day must solely be offered outside of meal service times.
- All foods and beverages offered and sold in schools during the school day shall be offered to students with consideration for promoting student health and reducing obesity, and shall comply with Smart Snack Standards. Please reference the Smart Snack Standards at the end of the policy.
- Foods and beverages provided through the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall comply with established federal nutrition standards.

Schools are encouraged to implement the following:

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

Competitive Foods

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.

Competitive foods available for sale shall meet or exceed the established federal nutrition standards (USDA Smart Snacks in School). These standards shall apply in all locations and through all services

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where foods and beverages are sold to students, which may include, but are not limited to: a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, snack carts and fundraisers. See standards attached at the end of the policy.

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.

Schools may impose additional restrictions on competitive foods, provided that the restrictions are not inconsistent with federal requirements.

Fundraiser Exemptions –

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 in accordance with applicable NDS policy and administrative regulations.

NDS may allow a limited number of exempt fundraisers as permitted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education each school year: up to five (5) exempt fundraisers in elementary and middle school buildings, and up to ten (10) exempt fundraisers in high school buildings. **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.

Non-sold Competitive Foods –

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 or exceed the standards established by NDS.

If the offered competitive foods do not meet or exceed the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, the following standards shall apply:

1. Rewards and Incentives:

- a. Foods and beverages used as a reward or incentive in schools shall be limited.
- b. Other non-food incentives that are strongly encouraged include:
 - a. 10 minutes of extra recess or free time at the end of class
 - b. Dress down day
 - c. Certificates, ribbons, or small prizes like pens, erasers, stickers, etc.
- c. Daily regular use of food/candy as a reward is not permitted.

2. Classroom Parties and Celebrations:

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- a. Classroom parties/celebrations with food/beverages shall be limited to no more than one (1) per month in each classroom.
3. *Shared Classroom Snacks:*
- a. Due to the diversity and breadth of schools NDS sponsors, policies for shared classroom snacks is deferred to the individual school.

Schools shall provide a list of suggested nonfood ideas and healthy food and beverage alternatives to parents/guardians and staff, which may be posted via schools website, student handbook, newsletters, posted notices and/or other efficient communication methods. Upon request, NDS can provide a list or guidance around nonfood suggestions.

Marketing/Contracting –

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).

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