

WELLNESS POLICY

A local school wellness policy is a written document that guides a local educational agency's (LEA) or school district's efforts to establish a school environment that promotes students' health, well-being, and ability to learn.

The wellness policy requirement was established by the Child Nutrition and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 and further strengthened by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). It requires each LEA participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program to develop a wellness policy. On July 29, 2016, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) finalized regulations to create a framework and guidelines for written wellness policies established by LEAs. The final rule requires LEAs to begin developing a revised local school wellness policy during School Year 2016-2017. LEAs must fully comply with the requirements of the final rule by June 30, 2017.

Thus, St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and the ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is a policy of St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School that:

- The Archdiocese of Omaha and St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School engages students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades PreK-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition 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.
- To the maximum extent practicable, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs (including National School Lunch Program).
- Schools 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, the St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School Wellness Committee will create, strengthen and work to develop, implement, monitor, review and revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.

Nutrition Education:

The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students' eating behaviors. St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will promote nutrition education throughout the students' PreK-8th grade 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 choice for a lifetime.

Meals served through the National School Lunch Programs will:

- Be appealing and attractive as possible to children;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- Ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information is made available on monthly menus and/or the school website. 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 and snacks meet the federal program requirements and nutrition standards.

Free and Reduced Lunch Meals: St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible and participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals. Free or reduced lunch applications are available all year long from the cafeteria manager, school office, rectory office, or school website.

Meals and Scheduling at St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School:

- Will have scheduled meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch will be scheduled between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.
- All student lunch periods will include at least 20 minutes of actual eating time for students to consume their food.
- Will not include scheduled tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
- Will 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 responsibility to operate a food service program, we will encourage continuing professional

development for all school nutrition professionals. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will not allow students to share their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Beverages, Foods, Snacks

Allowed – Free unlimited water; flavored or unflavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk for sale.

Not Allowed – Soda soft drinks as their lunch beverage.

Meals sold from St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School Meal Program: A lunch consists of five components. Students may decline two components, but are required to take a fruit or vegetable. The five components are protein, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Students will have two entrée options as well as a yogurt and cheese option with sides provided with all options. One additional entrée available with some entrees for sale upon request.

Snacks served during the school day, after-school care, or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. The school office will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than two parties annually. One snack item will be provided along with bottled water. Other food oriented parties need to be curriculum based. Items containing peanut and tree nuts will not be allowed at school.

St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will provide nutritional education and engage in nutritional promotions that:

- 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;
- Is part of not only physical education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, and social sciences;
- Promotes 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); and
- Links with community resources on health and nutrition.

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. St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School will promote opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day and during existing after-school programs. Physical activity, health and fitness education are incorporated throughout a students' PreK-8 grade educational program.

Integrating Physical Activity in the Classroom Setting

For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Therefore,

- 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. The physical education teacher reinforces nutrition/health ideas;
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

All students in grades PreK-8, including students with disabilities and special health-care needs, will receive weekly opportunities for physical education per Nebraska State Standards. All physical education classes will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving school activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

At St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School all students will have at least 20 minutes each day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which we encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School discourages extended periods (*i.e.*, 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, St. Cecilia Cathedral Grade School gives students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities

- Brain breaks scheduled into the daily academic schedule at all grade levels, PreK-8th.
- After-school child care and enrichment programs will provide and encourage, verbally and through the provision of space and equipment, daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.
- All students partake in an annual field day to promote physical activity, and sportsmanship which is planned, coordinated, and open to participation by all staff and students.

- An annual Cathedral Cup is held with open participation for all staff, students, and parish families.

Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) as punishment.

Monitoring and Policy Review

The school administration, faculty, and the Wellness Committee will ensure compliance with nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The Principal or designee will ensure compliance with established Archdiocesan wide 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 regularly to examine the compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from faculty, staff, and students. The wellness committee will consist of the school administrators, school health professionals, teachers, students, parents and community members (if possible).

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess programs, 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.