

Ephesus Academy's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, along with adequate exercise and rest, according to our faith, we must adopt the most healthful diet possible and abstain from the unclean foods identified in the Scriptures.

Whereas, as Seventh-day Adventists, we are to engage in whatever brings our thoughts and bodies into the discipline of Christ, who desires our wholesomeness, joy, and goodness.

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Ephesus Academy is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, the policy goals of the Ephesus Academy states that:

- We will engage 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 K-12 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; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; 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 the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], and Summer Food Service Program.
- Our school will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity that coincide with the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive 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;¹
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,3}
- be plant-based meals

We will 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, it will 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.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, Ephesus Academy will:

- To the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

Summer Food Service Program. Inform families of Summer Food Service Program for at least six weeks between the last day of the academic school year and the first day of the following school year, and preferably throughout the entire summer vacation.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;

¹ To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

³ A whole grain is one labeled as a “whole” grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include “whole” wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities; and
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

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

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Ephesus will 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

- A food item sold individually:
 - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
 - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁴
 - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).⁵

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, school fairs, or performances). Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events

⁴ If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from *total* sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

⁵ Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually according to Smart Snack standards.

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet Smart Snack standards for foods and beverages sold individually. The school will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs and snacks offered in any of the campus vending machines will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health and be in alignment with Smart Snack standards. There will also be an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. The school will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Rewards. The school will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,⁶ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. The school will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Ephesus Academy aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. It will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion 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 health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;

⁶ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- 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);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services; and
- 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 30 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:

- 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;
- 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.

Communications with Parents. Ephesus Academy will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will promote this through annual Let's Move Day, which will include healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips, and suggestions on how to keep students physically active at home. The school 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 parents a list of foods and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

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. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Staff Wellness. Ephesus Academy 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. The school will create a plan based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education Expectations: All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 100 minutes/week for elementary school students and 150 minutes/week for middle school students) for the entire school year. 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, preferably outdoors, during which staff should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

We will 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. We will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. We 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 child care 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.

IV. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The local school board will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the local school board.

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

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, we will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.⁷

Assessments will be repeated annually to help review policy compliance, assess progress, 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 local school board will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Triennial Progress Assessments At least once every three years, the school board will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to the school is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Leroy Abrahams, school board chairperson, 205-786-2194.
- The local school board, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor school's compliance with this wellness policy.
- The local school board or Ephesus Academy will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The local school board will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as District priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or

⁷ Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.

standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The school is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The school will actively communicate ways in which representatives of EA and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for our community. The school will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The school will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on its website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The school will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.

- The school will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy tri-annually, at a minimum.

The school will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

Recordkeeping

The School Board will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the records room of Ephesus Academy. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit local school board membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for the school; and
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for the school;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.