

St. Mary School Wellness Policy-2023

Wellness Policy Vision

St. Mary School strives to make a significant contribution to the spiritual well-being, physical capacity, and learning ability of each student and afford the opportunity to fully participate in the education process.

Therefore, St. Mary School promotes a healthy school by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, our school optimizes student performance potential.

To Achieve This Vision:

The Wellness Committee has created the following Wellness Plan which includes information on the St. Mary School' policies on creating a Healthy School Environment. This plan includes Nutrition Expectations and Guidelines for:

- Nutrition Education (p. 2,3)
- Physical Activity & Education (p. 7)
- Policies for Classroom & Child Celebrations (p. 4)
- Food at School Functions (p. 5)
- School-Provided Lunches (p. 3,5,6)
- Learning/ Behavior Incentives (p. 5)
- Family Provided Healthy Lunches and Snacks (p. 4)

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, it is the policy of St. Mary School to:

1. Ensure that all children have access to adequate and healthy food choices on scheduled school days at reasonable prices. St. Mary School will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and pleasant setting and adequate time for students to eat.
2. Operates under the National School Lunch Program regulations. Emphasis will be placed on foods that are nutrient dense per calorie. Foods will be served with considerations towards variety, appeal, taste, safety, and packaging to ensure high quality meals.
3. Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.
4. Ensure all students in grades 4k-8 have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

5. Coordinate school food service with the healthy lifestyles policy to reinforce messages about healthy eating and to ensure that foods offered promote good nutrition and contribute to the development of lifelong, healthy eating habits.
6. Provide school staff involved in nutrition education and in supporting a healthy school environment with adequate pre-service and ongoing in-service training.

1) Wellness Committee

The St. Mary School wellness team is responsible for the development, implementations, review, update, and reporting of the School's Wellness Policy. This charge is primarily assigned to the School Advisory Board members, together with the Food Service Coordinator.

2) Needs Assessment

Members of the Wellness Committee will conduct an annual wellness needs assessment . The Wellness Committee will use the results of the assessment to review the nutrition and physical activity policies.

3) Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is an important component of comprehensive school health. Teaching nutrition to children throughout their education experience is key to developing healthy eating habits. Nutrition concepts are to be reinforced throughout the year, and students can learn about food and nutrition as part of many subjects, including math, science, social studies, physical education, and health.

St. Mary School nutrition education goals are designed to help students:

- Improve health literacy, by learning about essential nutrients and the benefits of healthy eating
- Gain nutrition-related skills, such as understanding nutrition information and evaluating commercial food advertising

Student Nutrition Education: St. Mary School staff will integrate nutrition themes into lessons when appropriate. The health benefits of good nutrition are emphasized. The nutrition themes may include:

- Guide to a Healthy Diet
- Food Labels
- Understanding Calories
- Healthy Snacks
- Serving Sizes
- Identify & Limit Junk food
- Multicultural influences
- Sources/Variety of Foods

Parent Nutrition Education:

Families are partners in the nutrition program at St. Mary School. Nutrition information is shared with families via newsletters and/or FACTS. In addition to sharing knowledge of any food allergies and/or food restriction, parents are welcome to eat lunch with their children. Please call the school office by 10:00 a.m. and let us know, so we are sure to prepare enough.

4) Healthy and Nutritious School Environment : Nutrition Promotion

The sale of all food, beverages, and snacks to students during the school day shall be under the control of the principal or designee.

St. Mary School

- Reserves the right to limit quantities and exercise portion control of any food/snack/beverage offered at any time during the school hours and before/after care program.
- Will assess if/when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Lunchroom Climate: The St. Mary School lunchroom environment will provide students with a relaxed, enjoyable climate. The lunchroom will be a place where students have an adequate space to eat and pleasant surroundings and time for meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling : St. Mary school will:

- Strive to provide students in all grades with adequate time for meals(the American Food Service Association recommends at least 20 minutes for lunch for the time they are seated.)
- Schedule milk breaks/snack breaks a minimum of two hours before scheduled lunch times;
- Schedule tutoring, clubs, or organizational meetings/activities around mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities

Sharing of Foods and Beverages:

- All St Mary School personnel will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meals or snacks, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Snacks served during the school day, including for parties and special occasions, should make a positive contribution to children’s diet and health. There will be an emphasis on snacks and beverages that are healthy alternatives to cake and cupcakes, or other foods of minimal nutritional value.

Below is a list of **suggested beverages and snacks**:

- 100% Fruit or Vegetable juices
- Bottled water
- Reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk (white or flavored)
- Raisins and other dried fruit (no added sugar)
- Pretzels or Popcorn
- Low-fat/non-fat yogurt
- String cheese
- Low-fat pudding snacks
- Canned fruit (packed in 100% juice/no sugar added)
- Whole-grain bread products (e.g. bread sticks, rolls, bagels, and pita bread)
- Fresh Fruit (e.g. apples, oranges, bananas)
- Granola bars made with unsaturated fat
- Snack mixes of low-sugar cereal and dried fruit with a small amount of nuts and seeds
- Peanut butter (or sunflower butter) and low-fat crackers

Celebrations

St Mary School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. **Parties will be scheduled after school lunch time, whenever possible.** Families are encouraged to provide healthy snacks and treats for student celebrations and other events.

Parents/Families wishing to send special snacks for events(e.g. Birthday, ‘ Star Week’, etc.) should discuss with their child’s teacher regarding allergies or other considerations prior to sending treats. See list above.

Learning or Behavior Incentives in Classroom: Rewards can be an effective way to promote positive students behavior. However, using food and candy as a reward can undermine the nutrition education being taught and promotes the consumption of unhealthy foods. Teachers will consider using a different reward system. Possible non-food rewards could be:

- Trip to reward bin with non-food items (pencils, bookmarks, stickers, puzzles, etc)
- Sit by a friend
- Lunch outside(or class time outside)
- Being a Classroom Helper
- Listening to Music While Working
- Coupons for donated prizes (water bottles, event passes, etc)
- Free time at end of class
- Computer Time
- A “No Homework” pass
- Or many other ideas!

Food or beverages (including food served through school meals) will not be withheld as a punishment.

Food Sales: Any food item for sale prior to the start of the school day and throughout the day will have no more than 30% of its total calories derived from fat. Any food item for sale will have not more than 10% of its total calories from saturated fat. Encourage consumption of nutrient dense foods (i.e., whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables). See also: **Guidelines for Food and Beverages offered to Students at School Functions.**

Nutrition Standards for School Functions/Activities: To create a school environment that supports the promotion of healthy food and beverage choices for children, it is important to consider all venues where food and beverages are consumed or sold. St. Mary School strongly encourages the sale or distribution of nutrient dense foods for all school functions, activities, and fundraising. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories rich in the nutrient content needed to be healthy. In an effort to support the consumption of nutrient dense foods in the school setting we have adopted the following guidelines governing the sale of food, beverages, and candy on school grounds.

Guidelines for Food and Beverages Offered at School Functions

- Fresh Fruit & 100% Fruit Juices
- Fresh Fruit Juice Pops
- Dried Fruits
- Trail Mix
- Party Mix
- Low Sodium Crackers
- Baked Corn Chips & Fat-Free Potato Chips with Salsa or Low-Fat Dip (Ranch, French Onion, Bean, etc.)
- Low-Fat Muffins, Granola Bars, or Cookies
- Jell-O & Low-Fat Pudding Cups
- Pure Ice Cold Water

Organizations operating **concessions** at school functions should include at least some healthy food choices in their offerings.

All fundraising projects are encouraged to follow nutrition standards. Fundraising projects for sale and consumption within and prior to the instructional day will be expected to make every effort to follow the nutrition standards when determining the items being sold. Items being sold/offered that do not meet the guidelines may be acceptable for student consumption within moderation (i.e.: limit quantities sold to an individual student) or when offered only on an intermittent basis.

5) Nutrition Guidelines (Grades PreK-8)

The following nutritional guidelines apply to all students in grades PreK- 8:

- No fried food are prepared; foods served that were traditionally prepared in fryers are always oven baked.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables will be served as often as possible, given their availability and affordability.
- At least half of the served grain are whole grains.
- **Milk products:** Milk will be promoted during lunch time. Milk will be available to all students bringing sack lunches for a small fee. Milk is also available at snack time for a fee. Both unflavored and flavored milk will be available during milk break and school lunch. Low fat and skim milks are featured in single served sizes.
- **Fat Content:** Foods from reimbursable meals, over the course of five days, derive no more than 30% of their total calories from saturated fats. These recommendations are consistent with federal mandates.
- **Content from Added Sugars:** No individual item served by food service as part of a traditional meal, as an 'ala cart' item or as a snack item may contain more than one third of its weight from added sugar. An exception may be made periodically for a traditional meal treat.
- **Juice-Based Drinks:** Pure 100% juice is available as an additional beverage during snack time as an option on the snack cart.
- Children who bring **sack lunches** from home are asked to bring juice or water, or buy a carton of milk for a quarter. Families are encouraged to pack a healthy lunch.
- **Soda Pop/Sports Drinks:** No soda pop or sports drinks will be allowed during the school day, including students bringing soda pop/sports drinks in lunches or snacks. Exceptions may be made on special occasions by classroom teachers.
- **Energy Drinks: Will not be allowed in School.** What are energy drinks? Energy drinks are beverages like Red Bull, SoBe No Fear, and others which contain large doses of caffeine and other legal stimulants like ephedrine, guarana and ginseng. Energy drinks may contain as much as 80mg. Of caffeine, the equivalent of a cup of coffee. Compared to the 37 mg. Of caffeine in a Mountain Dew, or the 23 mg. In a Coca-Cola Classic.
- **Caffeine & Additives:** Products containing caffeine will not be available during lunch time. Food Service is sensitive to the presence of dyes, sulfites, MSG and other additives to food by limiting their use whenever possible or finding alternative products that have fewer additives. Food Service follows federal guidelines regarding sodium content in all food served.
- **Water Consumption:** Encourage increased consumption of water throughout the day. Staff members should be particularly sensitive to students' need for water during periods of hot weather. Even during periods of moderate temperature, staff members should remind students of the value of consuming water. Water sales should be an option through school concession services. Water is available at lunch time through school water fountains.

6) Physical Education and Activity

The mission of the Physical Education Curriculum is to incorporate a variety of physical experiences which focus on improving fitness and developing fitness and development skills that will help achieve a happy and healthy life. It will also develop the student's social, cognitive, and physical skills which will enable them to better appreciate God's gift of life and movement.

A physical education program provides an opportunity for students to acquire the knowledge and skills to lead an active lifestyle. Physical education is offered 2 times weekly at each grade level (K-8) as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skill necessary to promote and protect their health.

Daily Recess

- All students grade K-3: Two 15 minute and one 20 minute daily
- 4th - 5th Grade: one 15 minute and one 20 minute daily
- 6th - 8th Grade: one 20 minute daily

Physical Fitness Opportunities:

- Sports: volleyball for girls, basketball for both boys and girls grades 4 - 8
- Presidential Fitness Award
- Before & After School Physical Activities
- Physical fitness breaks are built into daily routines

Physical Activity and Punishment

St. Mary School will not use physical activity (e.g. running laps, pushups) for punishments and will not withhold all opportunities for physical activity activity (e.g. recess) as punishment.

7) Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Public Reporting

St. Mary School will measure the implementation of the Wellness Policy annually. This review will be to assess progress towards meeting the goals; and also to identify policy weaknesses and/or where changes need to be made. This review will be included in the School Advisory Committee meetings. The Committee will inform school families and the public about the content of this wellness plan and make the plan and any updates to the policies available to the public on an annual basis on the St. Mary School website.

St. Mary Wellness Committee reviewed and accepted this policy

- Food Service Coordinator -- Jessica Huebner
- Staff Member-- Heather Due
- Administrative -- Josh Schenemann
- Parent Representative-- Katie Krueger, Ellen Stevenson, Ginni Hamele