



Ark Community Charter School

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Wellness Policies on Physical Activity & Nutrition

Preamble

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

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

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, ACCS is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the ACCS to provide the following:

The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

- All students in grades K-6 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served at school will meet and exceed the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Experienced 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 medical issues, and 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 practical, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program)

- ACCS 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:

I. ACCS School Health Council

ACCS will create, strengthen, and work with the existing school health council to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as resource to the school for implementing those policies. (The school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and includes and is not limited to: a parent, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of 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 and exceed nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- maximize the use of fresh fruits and vegetables;²
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain;
- follow any medical concerns and restrictions;
- limit artificial sweeteners and foods with artificial coloring and refined sugar; and
- minimize the use of packaged and prepared foods and maximize “home-cooked” meals.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, and to meet and exceed their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, ACCS will:

- operate the School Breakfast Program
- serve breakfast to students and will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. ACCS will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals⁵. ACCS provides meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; and promotes the availability of school meals to all students.

Summer Food Service Program. In the event that ACCS provides a summer program, ACCS will sponsor the Summer Food Service Program during the scheduled program.

Meal Times and Scheduling. ACCS will:

- provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times;

- not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Experienced nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the Ark Community Charter School's responsibility to operate a food service program, the food service director will participate in ongoing professional development for nutrition.⁶

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. ACCS 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.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, emphasizing fresh fruits and vegetables and water as the primary beverage. ACCS will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. ACCS will not provide access to unhealthy food items via vending machines.

Rewards. ACCS will limit the use of foods or beverages which do not meet the nutrition standards as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages offered at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. ACCS aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. ACCS will:

- offer at each grade level a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise)

Integrating Physical Activity in the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (at least 60 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 and physical education will reinforce 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.

Communication with Parents. ACCS will support parent efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. ACCS will send home nutrition information or provide nutrition information in the Monday letter. ACCS will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and discourage snacks brought in from home.

ACCS will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities during, and after the school day; and support parent efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

Staff Wellness. ACCS 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.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) *Students will receive physical education (or its equivalent) of 90 minutes per week. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.*

Daily Recess. ACCS students will have at least 15 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which the students will be encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

ACCS will discourage extended periods 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 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., physical education) as punishment.*

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The Principal will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The ACCS principal will ensure compliance with those policies in and will report on the school's compliance to the 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 Principal. In addition, the Ark Community Charter School will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

Policy Review. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance,

assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review ACCS 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. ACCS, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

Footnotes

² 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.

³ As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

⁴ 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.

⁵ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.

⁶ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

⁷ Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

⁸ 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.

⁹ Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

¹⁰ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

¹¹ Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

¹² Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

¹³ 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.