

# **EL COLEGIO CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to guide practices which support the physical, environmental, social, and spiritual aspects of how a "whole person" thrives at El Colegio Charter School. A significant part of this will include promoting healthy eating and physical activity in the interest of supporting students' health, well being and ability to learn.

### **II. POLICY STATEMENT**

- A. El Colegio (EC) recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and education.
- B. EC will involve students, parents, teachers, food service staff and community partners and industry experts in implementing, monitoring and reviewing our Wellness Policy and Guidelines.
- C. The school environment will promote and protect students' health, wellbeing and ability to learn by providing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.
- D. All students will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- E. All students will have access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet their health and nutrition needs.
- F. All foods and beverages made available on campus (including, but not limited to, concessions, school sales, vending, and a la carte cafeteria items) will meet and strive to exceed USDA Dietary Guidelines where appropriate.
- G. The religious, ethnic and cultural diversity and food allergies of the student body will be respected in meal planning, nutrition education and physical activity; and the school will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time for students to eat.
- H. EC will participate in the federal school meal programs to the maximum extent practicable.

### **III. ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Administrative Director shall execute procedures that ensure the implementation of and compliance with the Wellness Policy and Guidelines. These procedures shall include adoption of guidelines, designation of site-based staff responsible for policy implementation and the development of a work plan with assessment, timeline and evaluation indicators. An annual report will be made to the Board to ensure compliance with the policy and guidelines.

### **IV. COMMUNICATIONS**

The school district will develop and implement a communications plan which includes staff and student training and communication to families to ensure understanding of the rationale for the wellness policy and needs and actions of the wellness policy.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **A. Foods and Beverages in Schools**

#### *1. School Meals*

- a. The school district will provide healthy and safe school meal programs that comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.
- b. The Food Services Department will aim to be self-supporting; however, budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of students.
- c. The Food Service Director will establish a menu committee that includes parents, students, and staff to assist in choosing new menu items to be served in schools.
- d. The District will accommodate the changing special nutrition needs of students; and will accommodate the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity of our community.
- e. Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:
  - Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, with an emphasis on including a variety of fruits and vegetables from the blue/purple, green, white, yellow/orange, and red fruit and vegetable groups on the monthly menu.
  - Serve only low fat (1%) and fat free milk except when whole or 2% milk is recommended for students with special nutritional needs; offer lactose reduced milk when requested by students and/or parent/guardian;
  - Work towards ensuring that at least half of served grains are whole grain;
  - Continue to exclude deep fried foods and strive to replace higher fat main entrée items with lower fat items as appropriate;
  - Continue to replace menu items that contain trans fats with foods that do not contain trans fats.
  - Be served in portion sizes that meet National School Lunch Program and Breakfast Program requirements.
  - Meet current USDA nutrition requirements.

#### *2. Food Safety*

- a. All foods sold or served to students will be prepared in health inspected facilities under the guidance of food safety certified staff.
- b. The District will provide student access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before students eat any meals or snacks.

#### *3. Scheduling of Meals*

- a. School sites will make every effort to provide sufficient time for all students to eat in the school cafeteria and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day. Schools will move towards:
  - Providing students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 15 minutes to eat after sitting down for lunch; and
  - Arranging for accommodations for students who need more time to finish their lunch; and
  - Scheduling meal periods at appropriate times i.e. lunch should be served between 10:50 AM and 1PM; and

- Scheduling lunch periods to follow recess periods in elementary schools to increase student nutrient intake and reduce food waste; and
  - Offering attractive dining areas which have enough space for seating all students scheduled for that meal period; and
  - Schools will evaluate their open campus policy taking into consideration the food choices that students make when they are able to leave campus.
- b. The district and individual school sites will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfast that encourage participation, including “grab and go” breakfast, breakfast in the classroom, or breakfast during morning break.

#### *4. Foods Sold Outside of the Reimbursable Meals Menus*

The District will recognize that the purpose of all foods sold outside of the reimbursable meals menu are for in between or as an addition to balanced meals. Foods and beverages sold or served on campus (including, but not limited to, concessions, school stores, vending, beverage contracts, and a la carte cafeteria items) will be limited to the following:

- Reimbursable meal menu items;
- Foods that contain 7 grams of fat or less per serving;
- Foods that do not have sugar or other caloric sweeteners as the first ingredient.

#### *5. Beverages*

a. The following beverages may be allowed for sale in all EC High School:

- unflavored or flavored low fat or fat free fluid milk and nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- water without added caloric sweeteners or artificial sweeteners;
- 100% juice.

b. The following beverages will not be allowed for sale in any EC High School:

- Sports drinks;
- Drinks which contain high fructose corn syrup (HFCS)
- Iced teas;
- beverages containing caffeine, excluding lowfat or fat free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

#### *6. Portion Sizes*

Except in cases where the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program require a larger serving size to meet meal pattern requirements, portion sizes of the following items will be limited to:

- a. One and one quarter ounces for baked chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, and dried fruit;
- b. One ounce for cookies;
- c. Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, and other bakery items;
- d. Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat free ice cream;
- e. Eight ounces for non frozen yogurt;
- f. Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, except
- g. 16 fluid ounces for milk;
- h. Unlimited for water
- i. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion size limits.

## **B. Nutrition Education**

### **1. Curriculum-Embedded Nutrition Education**

- a. EC will offer a composting class included in the science curriculum in order to teach students about the chemical make-up of food and the difference between foods grown in nutrient-rich soil versus other soil.
- b. Licensed EC teachers will be encouraged to develop and implement curriculum addressing nutrition and realistically healthy food choices within class curricula.
- c. EC will have at least 1 field trip to a farm or garden every year.
- d. Curriculum will stimulate and encourage appreciation of traditional cultural foods of all represented school ethnic groups and more.
- e. Curriculum will encourage and guide the use the school kitchen as a “learning laboratory” and include enjoyable and safe cooking experiences, to develop not only knowledge of food but skills for a lifetime of self-sufficient food preparation.
- f. Be culturally relevant and teach students about cross-cultural nutrition.
- g. Link with school meal programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services.
- h. Provide and promote nutrition education to families and the broader community in cooperation with such agencies as WIC, Community Health Clinics, ECFE, Adult Education and other community organizations, including promotion of food-based economic assistance at area farmers’ markets.
- i. Be reviewed district-wide annually through the school annual goal-setting process, specifically by the “whole person goal” team, with assistance and/or input from food service providers, health related services, school social worker, student council if applicable, parent association, government, and medical and nutrition professionals.
- j. Train staff in stress management, nutrition education and provide general wellness resources and opportunities.
- k. Be integrated with EC’s budding gardening program.

### **2. After-School Program.**

- a. EC’s after-school program will abide by all applicable policies for Food Safety and FNS service as outlined in (A) above.
- b. EC will continue to partner with organizations, particularly through the after-school program, which demonstrate and promote healthy foodstuffs that are based in cultural history and current culturally-based healthy practices. EC will continue to partner with organizations that engage our youth with community leaders and elders to such ends.
- c. EC will offer cooking classes as requested by students and families. Foods cooked in these classes will be generally “healthy”, as defined by the class instructor/organizer and the following criteria:
  - i. Limited refined sugars, including white sugar and HFCS
  - ii. Limited refined flours
  - iii. Limited oils and fats, especially saturated fats and polyunsaturated oils and fats
  - iv. Emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables

- v. Hormone-free eggs, meat, and poultry
- vi. Organic and locally-sourced ingredients when possible

### **C. Physical Activity**

1. Credit-based Physical Education Activity
  - a. EC will offer a 20-minute class before school called “Morning Focus” that will offer yoga, stretching, and other physical activities that increase flexibility in order to help students focus for the school day. This class will also teach mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing in order to build focus skills that students can use during the school day in class.
  - b. EC will offer at least 1 class during the 2-week “interim period” (usually January), focused on some aspect of physical activity and fitness.
  - c. Additional sports opportunities will be made available through the advisory system.
  - d. EC will maintain graduation requirements of .5 credits of Health and Physical Education in high school.
  - e. EC will follow state compulsory instruction law which requires all students under age 16 to receive instruction in health and physical education. There will be no exemptions to this law (i.e., choice between art, foreign language and physical education is not permissible).
  - f. Physical education courses will provide an opportunity for students to learn, practice and be assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills and knowledge.
  - g. EC will establish an enrollment cap for PE class sizes to ensure adequate supervision and minimize risk of school district liability for injuries.
2. Extra-curricular Sports
  - a. EC will strengthen partnerships between the school and outside sports activities so that students who attend the school will be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular sports.
  - b. EC will communicate clearly with all students that Charter School students are eligible for participation in High School Sports teams through their home area school.
  - c. Each student will be encouraged to take advantage of his or her status as public school students to voluntarily participate in extra curricular physical activities that meet his or her needs interests and abilities.
  - d. EC will maintain communication with coaching staff of area high schools where our students are involved.
  - e. EC’s after-school program, Juventud Conectada, will offer programs such as “Tamales y Bicicletas” (Tamales and Bicycles) that will teach the benefits of the physical activity involved with riding bikes, the environmental benefit of using bicycles for transportation, and the skills of repairing and using bicycles.
3. Additional Recreation Opportunities
  - a. EC will offer at least one yearly staff vs. students basketball game and at least one yearly staff vs. students soccer game.

- b. Schools shall work with recreation agencies and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff for physical activity during their out-of-school time.
  - c. School communities will examine if biking and walking to school is safe and encourage students to bike and walk to school where appropriate.
- 4. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting
  - a. Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities such as watching television;
  - b. Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons (such as science, math and social studies), where appropriate; and
  - c. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
  - d. Schools will discourage extended periods (i.e. periods of two or more hours) of inactivity.
- 5. Physical Activity and Punishment
  - a. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (i.e. running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (i.e. sports, physical education) as punishment.
  - b. Students will be held accountable to the same grade requirements for sports eligibility as students from the schools hosting the sports.

#### **D. Mental Health**

- c. EC will promote positive mental health for its students by maintaining a full time social work position dedicated to counseling for students.

#### **E. Staff Wellness**

School personnel serve as role models for students and are the key to successful implementation of student wellness programs. Therefore, EC should offer staff wellness programs as well as general wellness resources and opportunities. This may include workshops and presentations on health promotion, stress management, education and resources that will enhance morale, encourage healthy lifestyles, prevent injury, reduce chronic diseases, and foster exceptional role modeling.

#### **F. Communication with Families and the Community**

1. EC recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary and fundamental role in promoting and protecting their children's health and well-being.
2. EC will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.
3. EC will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value.
4. EC will provide information to families, community based organizations and the general public about ways to promote healthy lifestyles.
5. EC will encourage partners such as community based organizations and other out of school time activity providers to provide healthy foods and physical activity as part of their programming.

## **G. Implementation and Monitoring**

1. The Administrative Director shall execute procedures that ensure the implementation of and compliance with the wellness policy. These procedures shall include adoption of current guidelines, the designation of site-based staff responsible for policy implementation and an implementation work plan.
2. An annual report will be made to the Board to ensure compliance with the policy.
3. A Wellness Committee shall be formed.
  - a. Tasks shall include to plan, implement and improve EC's nutrition and physical activity environment and to create an initial redesign of the wellness policy based on inclusion of student, parent, staff, and community voices.
  - b. The Wellness committee will utilize the policy development tool designed for charter schools by the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support.
  - c. The Wellness Committee shall endeavor to embed wellness-related processes and practices within the scope of other school committees and within job descriptions of the leadership structure, thereby eliminating the need for a permanent Wellness Committee.
4. A school-wide assessment will be implemented to assess the nutrition and physical activity needs of students. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy, compliance, assess programs, and determine areas in need of improvement. The process will also address other components of the "whole person"; e.g. emotional, cultural, intellectual, occupational, material/financial. Create a tangible 1-year goal based on this assessment.
5. An implementation work plan will be created with timeline and evaluation indicators.
6. The Wellness Policy will be included in the School Improvement Plan.
7. EC will develop and implement a professional development communications plan which includes training to ensure understanding of the rationale for the wellness policy and the implementation plan.

**Legal References:** 42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act)

42 U.S.C. § 1771 *et seq.* (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)

P.L. 108-265 (2004) § 204 (Local Wellness Policy)

7 U.S.C. § 5341 (Establishment of Dietary Guidelines)

7 C.F.R. § 210.10 (School Lunch Program Regulations)

7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

**Local Resources:** Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota, [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org) and [www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/MNHealthy%20Foods%20for%20Kids%208-2004.pdf](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/MNHealthy%20Foods%20for%20Kids%208-2004.pdf)

American Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

American Heart Association, [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

Center for Disease Control

Hennepin County Health Department  
Minnesota Department of Education, [www.education.state.mn.us](http://www.education.state.mn.us)  
Minnesota Department of Health, [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)  
National Alliance for Nutrition & Activity  
School Nutrition, [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org)  
University of Minnesota Extension Service  
Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support; Healthy Schools, Healthy  
Communities Initiative.