

## **WELLNESS POLICY**

### **WELLNESS POLICY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to assure a school environment that promotes and protects students' health, well being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

### **GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY MMSA CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

- A. MMSA Catholic School recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process and that good health fosters student attendance and education.
- B. The school environment shall promote and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.
- C. The school encourages the involvement of students, parents, teachers, food service staff, and other interested persons in implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school nutrition and physical activity policies.
- D. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- E. All students in grades Pre – 8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- F. Qualified food service personnel will provide students access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students.
- G. Food service personnel will provide clean, safe, pleasant settings.
- H. Students will be given adequate time to eat school meals.

### **GUIDELINES Foods and Beverages**

1. Food service will gradually incorporate more whole and fresh foods into the school menus and decrease the amounts of processed foods.
2. All foods and beverages made available at school will be consistent with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
3. Students will not be allowed to have soda during the school day.
4. Food service personnel will adhere to all federal, state, and local food safety and security guidelines.
5. All treats brought into the school are to be commercially baked and candy is to be individually wrapped. All treats must be peanut free.

### **School Food Service Program/Personnel**

1. MMSA Catholic School will make every effort to provide students with sufficient time to eat after sitting down for school meals and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day.
2. MMSA Catholic School 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 meals.
3. Food service personnel will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meet or exceed all federal, state, and local laws and guidelines.
4. MMSA Catholic School will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
5. MMSA Catholic School will prohibit tutoring, club or organizational meetings, and activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
6. MMSA Catholic School shall designate the Director of Food Services to be responsible for the school's food service program, whose duties shall include ensuring food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
7. As part of MMSA Catholic School's responsibility to operate a food service program, the school will provide continuing professional development for all food service personnel.

### **Nutrition Education and Promotion**

1. MMSA Catholic School will encourage and support healthy eating and engage in nutrition promotion that is:
  - i. Offered as part of a comprehensive program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
  - ii. Part of health education classes as well as classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects, where appropriate.
2. MMSA Catholic School will encourage all students to make age appropriate, healthy selections of foods and beverages, including those sold individually outside the school meal programs, such as through vending machines and fundraising events.
3. MMSA Catholic School will limit the use of foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior (unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan or behavior intervention plan) and will not withhold food or beverages as punishment.

### **Physical Activity**

1. Students need opportunities for physical activity and to fully embrace regular physical activity. Toward that end, health education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities.

2. MMSA Catholic School will provide physical education classes as part of its curriculum.
3. Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
4. MMSA Catholic School will provide opportunities for students to participate in after-school sports to encourage physical activity outside of the school day.

### **Communications with Parents**

1. MMSA Catholic School recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary and fundamental role in promoting and protecting their children's health and well-being.
2. MMSA Catholic School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.
3. MMSA Catholic School will encourage parents to pack healthy snacks and refrain from including beverages and foods without nutritional value.
4. MMSA Catholic School will provide information to parents about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities.
5. MMSA Catholic School will notify parents of the financial status of their hot lunch/milk account. Parents are expected to keep a positive balance in their hot lunch/milk account. If the account becomes in arrears, the student will not be given a hot lunch, but will receive a sandwich and milk until the account is returned to a positive balance.