

St. Matthew School

Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Rationale

Childhood obesity is one of our nation's leading health threats. Today, nearly 1 in 3 youth are already overweight or obese. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 3 individuals born in the year 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes. If we don't reverse this epidemic, the current generation of young could live sicker and die younger than their parents.

Therefore, it is important that we, at St. Matthew School, with assistance of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis and local health agencies set a good example for our student body and allow all of them to have the appropriate opportunities to develop into health young adults. We feel the following statistics and statements help define the need for our policy:

- Students need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;
- Good health fosters student attendance and education;
- 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;
- 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 and teen-age years;
- Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;
- Community and family participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

St. Matthew School is committed to providing a school environment that promote and protect student's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of St. Matthew School that:

- The school 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-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Qualified food service 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, St. Matthew School will participate in available federal school meal programs (National School Lunch Program, Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program. Schools 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. School Wellness Committee

The school will create, strengthen, or work within the existing School Wellness Committee to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The School Wellness Committee consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on School Grounds

St. Matthew School School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to students;
- 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;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk³ and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

St. Matthew School will attempt to 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, St. Matthew School 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.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals St. Matthew 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. Toward this end, St. Matthew will provide meals at no charge to all students, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling

St. Matthew School:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;

- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

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

Sharing of Foods and Beverages St. Matthew School 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.

Fundraising Activities To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, St. Matthew School fundraising activities will strive to not involve food or will use only foods that meet the nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. St. Matthew School will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water or milk as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. St. Matthew School will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

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

Celebrations St. Matthew School will attempt to 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. St. Matthew School will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion St. Matthew School goals will be to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. St. Matthew School 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 enrichment subjects;
- 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;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; 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 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 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 St. Matthew School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. St. Matthew 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. St. Matthew School will attempt to provide parents a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, St. Matthew School will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

St. Matthew 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.

Staff Wellness St. Matthew School 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. St. Matthew School will establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be 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.

The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) and Health Education Students in Kindergarten, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive Physical Education class for 30 minutes two times per week. 1st-5th grade will receive 40 minutes of Physical Education two times for week. The middle school, grades 6-8, receive Physical Education for 40 minutes at least three times per week, and Health class for 40 minutes two times per week for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified Physical Education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or CYO sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 75 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

St. Matthew School 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, St. Matthew School should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School St. Matthew School will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or CYO sports programs. The school 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.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. Students should be under adult supervision while using this equipment. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring At St. Matthew School, the Principal or Wellness Committee will ensure compliance with those policies will report on the school's compliance to the school's PFA, School Commission, and State of Indiana. School food service staff at St. Matthew School will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Principal.

The Wellness Committee will develop annual summaries on school-wide compliance with the school's

established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from stakeholders within the school and outside of the school.

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, the St. Matthew Wellness Committee will review our 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. St. Matthew School, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.