



ST. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WELLNESS POLICY

June 2021

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Evansville are committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn, by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Evansville that:

- The schools will engage students, parents, teachers, food service staff, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades Preschool-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the

US. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

- Staff will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students, and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- 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.

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Evansville will continue to implement and annually update this policy for health and wellness of all students.

St. Matthew School's Health and Wellness Policy includes the following elements:

I. Wellness Committee

- St. Matthew School will form a Wellness Committee to serve as a resource to develop, implement, monitor, review, and revise school nutrition and physical activity policies.
- The Wellness Committee will meet once each semester with an agenda and minutes to be kept at the school level.
- The Wellness Committee will consist of individuals from the following areas:
 - School Administrator
 - Faculty/Staff members
 - Student(s)
 - Parent(s) or School Board Member
 - Cafeteria or Child Nutrition Manager
 - Health Care/Nutritionist/Certified Dietician professional

II. USDA Requirements for School Meals

- The school lunch program at St. Matthew School will:
 - Meet, at minimum, nutrition requirements established by USDA for federally funded programs, as found on the USDA website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>
 - Provide access to and emphasis on high quality foods and beverages such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and water.
 - Be appealing and attractive to students.
 - Be served in clean and pleasant surroundings.
 - Provide students with 20-30 minutes to eat.
 - Provide appropriate supervision in the cafeteria.
 - Provide students with access to free water or ability to purchase bottled water.
 - Promote school meal participation with taste tests, contests, etc.

- Make nutritional information of menu items available upon request.
- Parents will be provided with free and reduced lunch application forms at the time of enrollment and at the beginning of each school year. In order to protect student privacy, lunch money will be turned in at the school office rather than at the point of sale in the cafeteria.

III. Nutritional Guidelines for All Food and Beverages Sold

- Food and beverages sold outside of the Child Nutrition Program, including a' la carte and vending machine items, will be approved by either the school's Food Service Director or the School Wellness Committee, and will meet the following guidelines:
 - Beverages
 - § Water (flavored and non-calorie sweeteners)
 - § Fruit and vegetable juices
 - § Fruit based drinks containing at least 50% fruit juice
 - § Low-fat unflavored or fat-free flavored fluid milk
 - § Sports drinks (middle and high schools only)
 - Foods
 - § Individual food items must meet USDA Smart Snack Standards, which can be accessed at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-fo-cusing-smart-snacks>
 - Elementary and Middle Schools (Grades Preschool-8)
 - § Free water is available throughout the day.
 - § Vending machines dispensing either food or beverages are not accessible to students in grades Preschool-8 during school hours.
 - § Sale of foods and/or beverages containing caffeine or non-nutritive sweeteners is prohibited during the school day.
 - High Schools (Grades 9-12)
 - § At least 50% of all foods and beverages sold outside the reimbursable school meal programs during the school day will meet the nutritional guidelines above.
 - § Sale of foods and/or beverages containing non-nutritive sweeteners is prohibited during the school day.
 - § Vending machines dispensing either food or beverages are not accessible to students in grades 9-12.
 - Fundraising
 - § 50% of the school fundraising activities will not involve food.

§ Two exemptions, each exemption lasting one day in duration, are allowed during the school year if approved by the School Wellness Committee.

- School-Sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, Athletic Events, Dances, or Performances)

§ An effort will be made to offer or sell only those foods and beverages that meet the above nutritional guidelines.

IV. Nutritional Guidelines for Non-Sold Foods and Beverage

- Individual food items must meet USDA Smart Snack Standards, which can be accessed at:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks>
- Preschool Programs, After-School Care and/or Extra-Curricular Programs:
 - Beverages served will meet USDA Smart Snack nutrition standards.
 - Snacks served will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health.
 - Snacks served will emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and the importance of water as a beverage.
- Celebrations
 - St. Matthew School will allow healthy food choices for celebrations throughout the school year.
 - One celebration per year may be designated as exempt, which would allow for each healthy food or beverage to pair with a food or beverage that does not meet the nutrition guidelines for food and beverages sold individually.
 - Preschool students are allowed to bring in food or beverages that meet Smart Snacks Standards to celebrate their birthday.
- Rewards
 - Foods and beverages will not be used as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.

V. Food and Beverage Marketing

- St. Matthew School will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition guidelines for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.
- Promotional materials (Fall festival, give back nights, steak nights, fish fries, etc) that are distributed during the school day will not contain images or wording for food or beverage items that do not meet the nutritional guidelines for food or beverages sold individually.
- As contracts expire, promotional materials such as scoreboards, vending machines that currently advertise non-compliant foods or beverages will be changed to market water or only the company and not the product.
- Marketing strategies such as taste tests and signage in the cafeteria will be used to promote healthy food and beverages throughout the school.

VI. Nutrition Education

- St. Matthew School will follow health education curriculum standards and guidelines as stated by the Indiana Department of Education.
- Nutrition education will be taught by a licensed teacher in grades K-12. In self-contained classrooms, teachers holding an appropriate license may teach their own health and nutrition education, as well as other required subjects as their license allows.
- Nutrition education will be taught throughout grades K-12 including, but not limited to:
 - Nutrition Knowledge
 - § Benefits of healthy eating
 - § Essential nutrients
 - § Nutritional deficiencies
 - § Use and misuse of dietary supplements
 - § Safe food preparations
 - § Handling and storage
 - § Caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure
 - Nutrition Related Skills
 - § Planning healthy meals
 - § Understanding and using food labels
 - § Critical evaluation of nutrition information
 - § Commercial food advertising
 - Assessing Personal Eating Habits and Setting Achievable Goals
- Teachers are encouraged to integrate nutrition education into core curriculum in areas such as math, science, social studies, and language arts.
- Professional development opportunities will be shared with teachers and staff throughout the year.
- Cafeteria staff will participate in annual trainings as part of the professional standards required by the USDA.

VII. Nutrition Promotion

- Cafeteria staff will introduce students to new food choices once per semester. Consistent encouragement will be given to students to try new foods and make positive comments about foods.
- The cafeteria can be used to display nutrition education posters and food facts to encourage interest in healthy foods.
- The School Wellness Committee will explore and identify at least two of the Smarter Lunchroom techniques as listed at <http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/smarter-lunchrooms-strategies> to implement in order to promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students.
- St. Matthew School will schedule mealtimes so there is minimum disruption by recess and other special programs or events providing sufficient time for students to eat.
- All elementary and middle schools will provide the *Nutrition Nuggets* newsletter, via the school website, take home folders, or by email, in an effort to communicate, promote, and educate parents and guardians regarding nutrition and wellness. The cafeteria manager will provide nutrition information to families at the beginning of the school year.

VIII. Physical Activity

- Classroom Setting
 - Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle.
 - Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks such as brain breaks between lessons or classes as appropriate.
 - Teachers will avoid extended periods of inactivity (periods of 60 minutes or more). When activities such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain seated for long periods of time, students will be provided with periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand, stretch, and be moderately active.
- Physical Education Class
 - All students will participate in regular physical education classes (no waivers).
 - Physical education curriculum will follow the state standards.
 - Student involvement in other physical activities will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement in grades K-8.
 - Students will have 80 minutes of physical education each week and spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
 - The student to teacher ratio for physical education classes will be no larger than other classes (30 to 1).
 - Professional development will be available to PE teachers, especially at the Diocesan Teacher Share Meetings.
 - A licensed PE teacher in grades that are departmentalized will teach physical education. In self-contained classrooms, teachers

holding an appropriate license may teach their own physical education, as well as other required subjects as their license allows.

- Recess
 - All elementary school students (K-5) will have at least 20 minutes of supervised recess per day prior to lunch, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity, verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.
- Physical Activity and Punishment
 - Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (running laps, push-ups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (recess, physical education) as consequence to behavioral infractions.
- Rewards
 - Teachers are encouraged to use physical activity as a reward (for example, extra recess time).
- Field Day
 - Families are encouraged to participate in Field Day games and activities.

IX. Additional School-Based Activities

- Faculty and Staff will have the opportunity to be involved in wellness programs and efforts to build effective school health initiatives.
- School Faculty and Staff will encourage healthy eating behaviors by being role models to students during school hours when in the presence of students.
- Cafeteria staff will be hired with the understanding that they are responsible to adhere to the policies the school has in place.
- St. Matthew School will allow students to walk and bike to school. A bike rack is available.
- Students will have the opportunity to participate in a walking club before school several days each week.
- Nutrition education and wellness will be offered to students, parents, and staff through any of the following methods:
 - Health fairs
 - Healthy eating and wellness seminars
 - Newsletters
 - Handouts
 - Internet information consistent with USDA *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
 - Team Nutrition information.

X. Evaluation

- The school administrator, along with the School Wellness Committee, will complete the Diocesan Wellness Policy Checklist on school-wide compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies on an annual basis. The completed checklist will be submitted to the Catholic Schools Office by June 1.
- Every three years, the school administrator, along with the School Wellness Committee, will complete one of the following School Health Environment Assessment Tools:
 - HEROES Needs Assessment
 - USDA's WellSAT 2.0

XI. Person Responsible

- The school administrator will ensure compliance with the established Wellness Policy.
- The preschool director will ensure compliance with the established Wellness Policy in the Early Learning setting.
- The School Food Service Staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies for all food and beverages sold.

XII. Communication

- Progress and updates to the School Wellness Policy will be shared with the school and parish families using:
 - School newsletter
 - Website
 - School Messenger
 - Other forms of communication.
- Progress reports ensure transparency by including:
 - Web address of the wellness policy
 - Description of each school's activities and goals and current level of progress
 - Contact details for School Wellness Committee
 - Information on how to join the School Wellness Committee.

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