

The Children's Guild, Inc.
Policy & Procedure Manual

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Policy:

The Children's Guild is 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 Children's Guild that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing agency-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in all classrooms 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 *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition 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, The Children's Guild will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program and the Residential Food Service 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.

Rationale:

Children 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;

Thirty-three (33%) percent of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years of age) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from USDA Food Guidelines;

Nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

School districts throughout the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Procedure:

To achieve these policy goals, the following procedure will be implemented:.

I. School Wellness Committee

The Children's Guild has an existing wellness committee to develop, implement, monitor, review and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee also will serve as a resource to the school for implementing policies.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

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, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;¹
- include only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and

¹ 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.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.^{3,3}

The Children’s Guild will engage students and parents, through surveys and taste-tests of new entrees, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices. In addition, our schools will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information will be made available on menus, the Agency’s website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast: To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- The Children's Guild will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- The Children's Guild will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- The Children's Guild will notify parents and students of the availability of nutritious meals available through the School Breakfast Program.
- The Children's Guild will encourage parents, through newsletter articles, take-home materials or other means, to provide a healthy breakfast for their children.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals: The Children's Guild will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma related to, and prevent the overt identification of students who are eligible for, free and reduced-price school meals⁴.

Meal Times and Scheduling: The Children’s Guild:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch will be scheduled between 10:50 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.;
- will not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

³ 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.

⁴ 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.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff: The Children’s Guild is dedicated to operating a food service program with qualified nutrition professionals administering and serving school meals, and to provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in the schools. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition, school nutrition managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.⁵

Sharing of Foods and Beverages: The Children's Guild 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

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through fundraisers and the school stores, etc.)

Elementary Schools: The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children’s limited nutrition knowledge, food in the elementary school will be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually will be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

Middle/Junior High and High Schools: In the middle schools (junior high schools) and high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water⁶ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

A food item sold individually:

- will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;

⁵ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

⁶ 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).

- will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;⁷
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

Fundraising Activities: To support children’s health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Our 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 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. The Children's Guild will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

Rewards: Schools will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior,⁸ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations: Schools should 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 (above). A list of healthy party ideas will be distributed to parents and teachers.

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

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion: The Children's Guild aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should 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;

⁷ 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.

⁸ Unless this practice is allowed by a student’s individual education plan (IEP).

- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective 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:

- 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: The Children's Guild will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The Children's Guild will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools 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. The Children's Guild will provide parents a list of foods that meet the schools snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, The Children's Guild will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The district/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 newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

Staff Wellness: The Children's Guild 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. Our school will maintain a staff Wellness Committee composed of at least five staff members, school nurse, and a recreation representative. The committee will develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan will be based on input solicited from school staff and will outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff Wellness Committee will distribute the plan.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.): All students, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students and 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students) 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 intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess: All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Schools should 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, 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.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring: The VP of Special Projects or designee will ensure compliance with the established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policy. In each day school, the Director of Education or designee will ensure compliance of this policy the school and will report on the school's compliance to the VP of Administrative Services or designee.

School food service staff, at each school, will ensure compliance with nutrition policy within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Operations Manager. In addition, Operations Manager will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the agency has not received a SMI review from the State agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The Operations Manager or designee will develop a summary report every three years on compliance with the agency's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policy, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the Vice President of Educational Services and also distributed to all school health committee, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review:

Assessments will be completed every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school district 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. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.