



Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, 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, and

Whereas, school-wide participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Gethsemane Lutheran School 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 Gethsemane Lutheran 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 school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades PreK-8 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, our school will participate in available federal school meal programs.
- School 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. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages 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;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that whole grain are served.
- Food staff will engage students and parents in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, the food staff will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students as requested.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Gethsemane Lutheran 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.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Gethsemane Lutheran School will:

- provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- 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 nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of Gethsemane Lutheran School's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Gethsemane Lutheran 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.

Other Foods and Beverages

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. Gethsemane will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. Gethsemane Lutheran School will encourage parents to send healthy snacks

Rewards. Gethsemane will not use foods or 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. Gethsemane will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Gethsemane will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

II. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Gethsemane Lutheran School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Gethsemane Lutheran School should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level
- 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;

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. Gethsemane Lutheran School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Gethsemane Lutheran 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. Gethsemane Lutheran School will provide ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, Gethsemane Lutheran School will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

Gethsemane Lutheran 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. Gethsemane Lutheran 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.

III. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Physical Education (P.E.) K-8. All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities and special health-care needs, will receive physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students and 180 minutes/week for middle school students) for the entire school year. 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 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students (K-5) will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, and Gethsemane Lutheran School will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. Gethsemane Lutheran School will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs.

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.

Safe Routes to School. Gethsemane Lutheran School will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. Gethsemane Lutheran School will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations.

IV. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The principal will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will report to the school board on changes and improvements in the school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies and procedures.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the principal. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

Assessments will be repeated every five years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, Gethsemane Lutheran School 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.