



## **Diocese of Covington Local Wellness Policy for Schools**

The Federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2010 requires that all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program implement a Local Wellness Policy. The new law mandates that Local Wellness Policies include:

1. Goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other School-based activities.
2. Designation of a responsible person(s) for ensuring the Wellness Policy Guidelines are met.

### **Diocese of Covington Wellness Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Schools**

#### **Preamble**

The Diocese of Covington is committed to providing nutritious meals in our schools. Healthy, well-fed students learn better, are more attentive and are less of a discipline problem. While we realize that schools cannot be expected to shoulder the burden of reversing the trend in childhood obesity on their own, we must do our part to provide a policy and environmental changes to support healthier choices for both students and staff. Schools are, after all, the place where youth spend a substantial portion of their time. And, given the opportunity, school staff can model healthier lifestyle choices to the students. Wellness Policies make sense, not only for now but for the future of our children.

Because children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active to grow, learn and thrive and because good health fosters student attendance, the Diocese of Covington School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, wellbeing, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. In support of this commitment, the Diocese of Covington has developed the following local wellness goals:

## **GOAL 1 - Nutrition Education, Physical Activity, and School Based Activities**

Schools are to include nutrition education in science, health, and physical education classes. Students, parents, food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members should be called upon to assist the teacher. If a formal breakfast program is not possible, healthy pick-up breakfast items could be available in the morning for those students who come to school with no breakfast. In addition to nutrition education, students should be discouraged from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restriction on some children's diets.

Physical activity needs to occur on a regular basis. Where possible, certified PE instructors should teach all PE classes, utilizing a K-12 curriculum. Recess, extra time at lunch and/or breakfast, and scheduled PE classes are encouraged. Teachers and school administrators need to work on scheduling so adequate time is allowed for these activities. In the event the above cannot be implemented, another form of activity should be in place at the school. Additionally, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education classes. In order for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, they need to be encouraged to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.

School based activities such as fundraisers, rewards and celebrations should not involve food or beverages, or should use only foods and beverages that meet the acceptable nutrition guidelines. Schools should conduct fundraising activities that promote physical activities. Rewards for academic performance or good behavior need not be centered around food; non-food items should be used in place of food. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month, and healthy food choices should be made for these celebrations.

## **GOAL 2 - Nutrition Guidelines for Foods**

Menu planning in the Diocese of Covington needs to be in accordance with the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program Guidelines. Meeting the nutrition standards recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (the new Food Guide Pyramid).

Students should be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast since children who come to school hungry may find it difficult to stay alert and learn.

Smart Snacks: compliance is a requirement of all school meal program sponsors. These standards apply to any food and beverage that is sold to students during the instructional day (through the NSLP and SBP).

- The period from midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the last lunch period is exclusive to sales and foods directly provided/sold to students through the school meal programs.
- From 30 minutes after the last lunch period to 30 minutes after the end of the school day, any food/beverage sales (a la carte, school store, snack bars and vending machines) accessible to students, whether given to or sold to students on the school campus, must be SS compliant.
- Areas/locations that are not for student access, like teachers' lunches, are not included in this regulation, but it is always recommended to adopt similar standards to promote staff health and wellbeing for both themselves, and for when they are in front of their students (which can be included in the policy's food/beverage marketing goals).
- Fundraising items that are food/beverage are also subject to these standards unless the items being sold are not intended for on-campus consumption. There are no exemptions to this rule!
- In the policy provided, there is a section for SS compliant allowable/unallowable beverages, but the information was not accurate. The following are the allowable and unallowable beverages for each age/grade group according to the SS standards:

→ Elementary Schools

- Water (unflavored)
- (Un)Flavored low/non-fat fluid milk
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- No caffeine or carbonation

→ Middle Schools

- Water (unflavored)
- (Un)Flavored low/non-fat fluid milk
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- No caffeine or carbonation

→ High Schools

- Water (flavored or unflavored w/o calories)
- (Un)Flavored low/non-fat fluid milk
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice
- Low-calorie with or without caffeine and/or carbonation
- 0-calorie with or without caffeine and/or carbonation
- Coffees – (un)flavored and/or with low/non-fat fluid milk and/or with creamer/sugar the standards for a low-calorie beverage must be met

Every effort needs to be made to include fresh fruits and vegetables in the school menus. Salad, fruit, and potato bars are encouraged if it is within the school's financial ability to offer such.

To encourage students to try eating healthier foods that may not be familiar to them, taste tests should be done when a new product is offered.

### **Goal 3 - A Plan for Measuring Implementation of the Local Wellness Policy**

To ensure compliance with the Local Wellness Policy, the Diocese of Covington Food Service Director will conduct a review of each school's program and will attach a copy of that review.

If a school needs assistance with implementing the Local Wellness Policy, the Food Service Director will be available on an ongoing basis.

Schools are encouraged to purchase a computer program that will enable them to provide a nutrient analysis of their menus. Since the Diocese does not have a standard menu for all schools, each school will be responsible for providing the information to parents and all interested parties. Schools with web sites should publish menus on the site and provide nutrition information for each meal.

### **Goal 4 – Designation of Food Service Director to Ensure Implementation of Wellness Policy on Local Schools**

The Director for Catholic Education designates the Diocesan Food Service Director to be responsible for ensuring the Wellness Policy goals are being implemented at the local level.

### **Goal 5 – Public Involvement in Development of Wellness Policy for Schools**

The involvement of students, parents and the community are already a valuable component of the National School Lunch Program; however, with the implementation of the Local Wellness Policy, it becomes critical to invite further involvement. School administrators and others in the school community should work with the food service staff at each school to implement the diocesan policy and to develop a Local Wellness Policy appropriate to each school. The policy should be included in student and parent handbooks so the information is available to all concerned; it should also be included on the school and/or parish website.