

Lift For Life Academy Wellness Policy

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Lift For Life Academy Wellness Policy

Preamble

Lift For Life Academy (hereto referred to as the Academy) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The Academy believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines the Academy's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the Academy have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the Academy in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The Academy establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools in the Academy.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The Academy will convene a representative Academy wellness committee (hereto referred to as the AWC) that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this Academy-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The AWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (ex., health education teachers, and social services staff [i.e., school counselors or social workers]; school administrators (ex., director, deputy director, principal, dean), school board members; health professionals (ex., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. To the extent possible, the AWC will include representatives from each school and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Director or designee(s) will convene the AWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure the Academy’s compliance with the policy.

Name	Title	Email address	Role
Kenneth Hayden	Chef	khayden@liftforlifeacademy.org	Designated AWC Leader

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The Academy will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and progress reports can be found at: www.liftforlifeacademy.org.

Recordkeeping

The Academy will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the Academy’s Administrative Offices.

Documentation maintained in this location will include:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit AWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports; and
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

The Academy will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the schools within the Academy in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year [in *April*]. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy;
- A description of the Academy's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of Academy events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated Academy policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the AWC or SWC.

The Academy will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

The AWC will establish and monitor goals and objectives for each of the content-specific components listed in Sections III-V of this policy.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the Academy will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which the Academy is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the Academy's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Academy's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Kenneth Hayden, chef, khayden@liffforlifeacademy.org.

The AWC will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

The Academy will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The AWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as Academy priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The Academy is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The Academy will actively communicate ways in which representatives of AWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that Academy. The Academy will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The Academy will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the Academy's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The Academy will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the Academy is communicating other important school information with parents.

The Academy will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our school Academy is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

The Academy participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The Academy is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The Academy offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)

- Promote healthy food and beverage choices including some of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans)
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* ("school day" is defined in the glossary). The Academy will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The Academy is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day* will meet the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, a la carte options in cafeterias and vending machines.

Celebrations and Rewards

Foods offered on the school campus will be encouraged to follow the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The Academy will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The Academy will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards; and
3. Rewards and incentives. The Academy will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#).

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards will be encouraged when fundraising during the school day*. The Academy will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [examples from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and the [USDA](#)].

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

The Academy will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional possible promotion techniques that the Academy may use are available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

Nutrition Education

The Academy aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, and school gardens;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;

- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The Academy will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

[USDA's Team Nutrition](#) provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The Academy is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The Academy strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on Academy property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the Academy is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the Academy to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the Academy's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students during the school day* will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food advertising and marketing is defined¹⁵ as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by the Academy.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

IV. Physical Activity

Academy students should participate in physical activity in accordance with state requirements. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, classroom-based physical activity, and out-of-school time activities and the Academy is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). The Academy may participate in *Let's Move! Active Schools* (www.letsmoveschools.org) in order to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. The Academy will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the Academy will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The Academy will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

The Academy will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education.

The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection).

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The Academy will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All Academy students will receive physical education in accordance with state guidelines.

The Academy physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The Academy will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Recess (Elementary)

If the Academy opens an elementary school, it will follow guidelines for recess, including offering recess on all or most days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal days.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions. In the event that the school or Academy must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess

guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable. Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class.

Physical Activity Breaks

The Academy recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The Academy recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The Academy will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The Academy will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Before and After School Activities

The Academy offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The Academy will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The Academy will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Staff in the Academy are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the AWC.

Community Partnerships

The Academy will continue relationships with community partners (i.e. hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

The Academy will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the Academy will use electronic mechanisms (such as email or displaying notices on the Academy's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The AWC will also focus on staff wellness issues, identify and disseminate wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

The Academy will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The Academy promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Professional Learning

The Academy will offer resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). This will help Academy staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing Academy reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

School Day - midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

Appendix:

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- ¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>.