



# Family Life Academy Charter Schools Network Wellness Policy

Adapted from the NYC DOE Wellness Policy by the FLACS Network Wellness Team  
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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
Purpose .....	3
Background .....	4
Specific Policies .....	5
I. School Wellness Team.....	5
II. School Meals .....	5
III. Food Sales and Fundraising.....	6
<i>Approved Items</i> - .....	6
<i>Prohibited Items</i> - .....	6
<i>Food Marketing</i> - .....	7
IV. Nutrition Education and Promotion.....	7
<i>School Gardens</i> - .....	7
<i>Food as Reward</i> .....	7
<i>Classroom Celebrations</i> -.....	7
V. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education.....	8
<i>Daily Physical Education K-12</i> -.....	8
<i>Curriculum</i> – .....	8

<i>Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting -</i> .....	8
<i>Daily Recess for Elementary Grades</i> .....	8
<i>Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School</i> .....	8
<i>Physical Activity and Punishment -</i> .....	9
<i>Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours</i> .....	9
VI. Communications and Partnerships with Families .....	9
VII. School Environmental Health.....	9
<i>Improving Indoor Air Quality:</i> .....	10
<i>Promoting Green Cleaning Activities:</i> .....	10
<i>Preventing Bus Idling:</i> .....	10
<i>Promoting Healthy School Repair, Maintenance, and Construction Practices:</i> .....	10
<i>Promoting Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship:</i> .....	10
VIII. Staff Wellness.....	11
<i>Supporting Staff in Health and Wellness Activities</i> .....	11
<i>Staff as the Behavior Model for Students</i> .....	11
IX. Monitoring and Policy Review.....	11
Inquiries.....	11

## **Introduction**

The Family Life Academy Charter Schools (FLACS), in partnership with the Latino Pastoral Action Center and parents, seek to create the conditions for self-empowerment for all its K-8 students to achieve high academic standards, help them take responsibility for their own learning, and encourage them to explore and affirm human values. Like a family – and in collaboration with each family – the schools will create an orderly, nurturing and dynamic environment where learning is engaging, meaningful, and joyful. All members of the school community (students, parents, and teachers) will develop the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm to continue throughout their lives, expand their understanding of what is possible for themselves and their world, and lead productive and satisfying lives.

As such, the FLACS Network 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, the FLACS Network will:

- Provide opportunities for physical activity and encourage all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Ensure that food and beverages sold or served at school meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Ensure that school meals provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutritional needs.
- Participate in available federal or state reimbursable school meal programs.
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to students and their families to foster life-long habits of healthy eating and physical activity.
- Establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, families, and related community service agencies.

## **Purpose**

The FLACS Network Wellness Policies are a set of guidelines created by members of the network wellness team. The FLACS Network is committed to increasing the health and wellness of its students. The FLACS Network believes that fostering a healthy environment through wellness policies will create an environment conducive to learning and success. The FLACS Network believes that healthy young people are more likely to become healthy adults.

We will accomplish the above commitments through meeting the following goals:

- To ensure that school is a place that promotes healthy eating and physical activity for our students;
- To promote lifelong healthy eating choices and habits for our students, their families, and our staff;
- To promote lifelong participation in physical education for our students, their families, and our staff;
- To develop a comprehensive framework for health education in all FLACS schools;

- To increase education and awareness of health topics for parents and staff;
- To be a change agent for health awareness for each school's immediate neighborhood.

## **Background**

There are a variety of health and wellness issues affecting the South Bronx and the FLACS Network. These health and wellness issues underpin the urgency to have a comprehensive focus on health in wellness in our Schools

### South Bronx Data: <sup>1</sup>

- 65.6% of all South Bronx residents are overweight and obese, compared to 55.9% in NYC overall.
- 15.8% of South Bronx residents have diabetes compared to 10.7% in NYC overall. The South Bronx has the highest proportion of adults with diabetes-more than 7 times higher than the lowest rate in the city (15.8 % vs. 2.4%). Those who are obese are much more likely to have diabetes than non-obese adults.
- 18% of South Bronx residents consume zero servings of fruits and vegetables per day. Only 4.3% of the neighborhood residents consume 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Compared to the NYC overall average of 9.8%, the South Bronx is one of the neighborhoods with the lowest levels of fruit and vegetable consumption.
- The nutritional environment probably plays a significant role in these health conditions, with the large number of bodegas selling unhealthy food and the low number of sources for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- With regards to meeting the 2008 Federal physical activity recommendations, 26.9% of South Bronx residents were insufficiently active (less than 150 minutes of weekly physical activity) compared to the NYC average of 20.3%.
- Another health concern in the neighborhood and for the school includes the higher rates of asthma compared to the rest of New York City (asthma is linked to high rates of absenteeism in schools)

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<sup>1</sup> (Citation Needed)

## Specific Policies

### I. School Wellness Team

The FLACS Network Wellness Team – consisting of teachers, school staff members, parents\*, students\*, and representatives of the school food program will monitor school nutrition and physical activity policies and practices. The team's role is advisory; final responsibility for implementation rests with the CEO and principals. The School Wellness Team will meet at least once a month. (\* the team will initially start with school based staff and expand to include parent and student representatives)

### II. School Meals

The FLACS Network encourages its students to participate in the school meals program through ensuring that the cafeteria is a clean, safe and pleasant setting with adequate time for students to eat, that food is both nutritious and of high quality, and encouraging students to try new foods such as vegetables in the cafeteria. After obtaining food, students will have at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and 20 minutes to eat lunch. Menus and nutritional information will also be available for the students and parents. The FLACS Network schools will contract with or internally provide school breakfast and lunch that is healthy and nutritionally balanced and complies with the guidelines stipulated by the National School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program<sup>2</sup>.

To meet students' nutritional needs and stress the benefits of a healthy breakfast, the FLACS Network encourages students to participate in a school breakfast programs. Breakfast will continue to be offered at no charge to students in FLACS schools.

To meet students' nutritional needs and stress the benefits of a healthy lunch, the FLACS Network encourages students to participate in a school lunch programs, which will be offered free of charge to all students because of the high percentage of students who qualify for free- or reduced lunch. All schools will have a salad bar available to students every day. The schools will work to ensure the salad bar is stocked with fresh and healthy options and to promote its use to the school communities.

Students will be encouraged to participate in the school lunch program. Accommodations will be made as possible for students with specific dietary restrictions (such as food allergies, religious restrictions, and other restrictions). Families may opt not to participate in this program. Those families that opt not to participate in the school meals program must adhere to a set of guidelines about what foods are allowed in school, which will be incorporated into the parent handbook. Families will not be allowed provide students with candy, chips, soda or other sugary snacks or beverages.

Students and staff will have access to free, safe, and fresh drinking water during school meals provided through functioning water fountains, water coolers, water jets, or pitchers of water placed on table/service line.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program-sbp>

### III. Food Sales and Fundraising

School-sponsored fundraising will be supportive of healthy eating and physical activity by emphasizing the sale of healthy food items (fresh fruit and produce), and non-food sales such as plants, water bottles, etc., and by promoting active events. The school administrators, with the assistance of the School Wellness Team, will create and promote a list of non-food fundraising activities, specifically those involving promoting physical activity. The Family Life Academy Charter Schools Network will use the non-food activities identified in the list in at least 75% of fundraising activities.

Some examples of non-food/healthy fundraisers may include:

- Pumpkin Sales for Halloween
- Walk-a-thons
- Read-a-thons
- Plant Sales for Mother's Day and Father's Day
- Sale of student-made greeting cards
- Recycling drives
- Concerts or shows

The remaining 25% may include the sale of healthy food items.

**Approved Items** - If the FLACS Network offers items for sale, either through fundraisings, school stores, or vending machines, during school or after-school hours, they will choose the Healthier Items from the SchoolFood-approved list available on the SchoolFood website, <http://www.opt-osfns.org/schoolfoodny/resources/snackandbeverageguidelines.pdf> of the follow the guidelines. Effective February 2010 the nutritional standards for approved snacks and beverages are as follows:

- The maximum level of fat is 35 percent of total calories
- Less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat
- 0.5 grams of transfat or less
- Less than 35% of calories from sugar (fruit products with no added sugar are exempt)
- Less than 200 total calories
- Sodium content may not exceed 200 mg per portion
- Grain-based products must contain at least 2 grams of fiber per serving

**Prohibited Items** - The following items may not be offered for sale to students through vending machine, student fundraising, and/or other FLACS fundraising activities:

- Chewing gum
- Candy (including hard candy, jellies, gums, marshmallow candy, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn)
- Chips (including Doritos, Takis, potato chips, etc.)
- Water ices which do not contain fruit or fruit juices
- Artificial sweeteners

**Food Marketing** - Family Life Academy Charter Schools will encourage students to make healthy food choices through posting up materials, posters, and information on bulletin boards that promote healthy eating. School based marketing and promotion of foods & beverage with low or no nutritional value is prohibited on campus and offsite at school-sponsored events. Marketing and promotion of unapproved foods should not appear on signage, vending machines, logos, scoreboards, schools supplies, school publications, coupons, incentive programs, and flyers.

#### **IV. Nutrition Education and Promotion**

The FLACS schools will use a comprehensive health education curricula at all grade levels, to be determined by the wellness committee. The wellness committee, in conjunction with the school administrations, will research programs to use in the school, either taught by specials teachers, as integrated into the science or other curriculums by the classroom teachers, or through external educational consultants. The nutrition curricula will use real-world examples that teach skills that are behavior based (such as how to choose healthier options in a store).

**School Gardens** - All FLACS schools will incorporate an indoor or outdoor gardening component and will use its school garden as an indoor or outdoor classroom for nutrition, science, and other lessons.

**Food as Reward**- Teachers will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. The FLACS Network will also prohibit the use of withholding food and beverages as punishment.

**Classroom Celebrations**- The FLACS network will limit the frequency of classroom celebrations that include food and will provide recommendations for non-food celebrations and healthy classroom celebrations. Furthermore, FLACS Network is committed to a Healthy Snack Policy. Only foods in "Recommended Snack List" will be allowed.

##### **Recommended Snack List for Classroom Celebrations**

- Fresh fruit and smoothies
- Raw vegetables
- Yogurt dipping sauce for fruit and vegetables
- Low fat cheese
- Dried fruit
- Plain yogurt (provide fresh fruit topping)
- Air popped popcorn
- Pretzels
- Hummus
- Any other snack that fits the guidelines on page 5
- Healthy Beverages
  - Low-fat or skim (fat free) milk
  - Tap water (add fruit slices for added flavor and fun)
  - Seltzer water with a little 100% fruit juice
  - 100% fruit juice (6oz recommended limit)

## V. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

**Daily Physical Education K-12** -The FLACS Network will provide daily physical education (or an alternate schedule that meets New York State requirements) to all students, including students with disabilities and/or special health-care needs and those in alternative educational settings.

As of 2007-2008, meeting the NYSED requirements for physical education is part of the Principal's Compliance Checklist. NYSED regulations states there is 120 minutes required at minimum of PE per week for grades K-6, 90 minutes of PE for grades 7-8, and daily PE for grades K-3. To the extent possible, physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher or a teacher specializing in physical education. Students should spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity. For more information regarding the learning standards necessary in a quality PE program please visit:  
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/pe/pels.html>

**Curriculum** – The FLACS Network committed to the use of a health-related fitness curriculum, developed internally at each site.

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting** - For students to receive the nationally-recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, they need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end the FLACS Network will:

- Provide classroom health education that complements 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.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity as part of other subject lessons using specific programs such as Move to Improve, Activity Works, Adventure to Fitness, Brain Breaks or other program).
- Have classroom teachers provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Daily Recess for Elementary Grades** – Each FLACS school will provide all its students with at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess during which time staff encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide appropriate space and equipment. Since outdoor activity is not possible, the schools will provide the activities such as these to insure that our students have access to physical activity every day:

- Move to Improve
- Tai Chi for Kids
- Yoga

**Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School** – The FLACS Network will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs, intramural programs, interscholastic sports programs.<sup>3</sup> After-school programs should encourage daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants to the extent possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Specific programs will be discussed and added in a later amendment to this document. At the present time this will include the interscholastic sports teams that the middle school participates in.

***Physical Activity and Punishment*** - Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withholding opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

***Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours*** -The FLACS Network will allow school spaces and facilities to be available for school-sponsored activities that promote fitness for its students, their families, and staff during non-school hours.<sup>4</sup>

## **VI. Communications and Partnerships with Families**

Families are a crucial partner in supporting the health and wellness of the school community. The FLACS Network supports parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children through:

- Providing healthy-eating seminars and/or workshops for parents, sending home nutrition information, posting nutrition tips on school websites, and providing nutrient analyses of school menus.
- Encouraging parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the DOE nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.
- Providing parents with a list of foods that meet the DOE's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities.
- Providing opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.
- Providing information about physical education and other school-based physical activities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside school.
- Provide information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, and special events
- Including parents as partners in participation in health events at the schools, participating in the Wellness Committee, and soliciting feedback through surveys, interviews, and questionnaires.

## **VII. School Environmental Health**

Given the duration of time that children spend at school, addressing the environmental hazards they confront at school is important for their wellbeing. Moreover, healthy schools are better performing schools. Research shows that a healthy school environment can be beneficial for the health of students and staff. Healthier school environments have also been shown to reduce absentee rates among students and promote better educational outcomes. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has summarized the evidence showing that healthy school environments can promote better student health and performance. For more information, visit [http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/pdfs/student\\_performance\\_findings.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/pdfs/student_performance_findings.pdf)

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<sup>4</sup> Specific programs will be determined at a later date.

The FLACS Network Wellness Team will ensure that staff are trained to identify problems that may impact school environmental health, and will take action to improve school environmental health as needed. The FLACS Network Wellness Team will also monitor school environmental health at regular intervals, and will promote healthy environmental practices.

***Improving Indoor Air Quality:***

The FLACS Network will use the EPA's "Tools for Schools" kit to educate the entire school community about the importance of healthy indoor air quality in the school. This resource can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/>

The FLACS Network will use the EPA's "Tools for Schools" resources to ensure healthy indoor air quality, including by:

- Maintaining quality ventilation systems.
- Ensuring a proper "integrated pest management" (IPM) program. IPM consists of common-sense strategies to reduce sources of food, water and shelter for pests in the school, and the careful use of least-toxic pesticides only when necessary.
- Preventing water damage, mold formation, and generation of other contaminants that could trigger asthma attacks or cause other health problems.
- Using non-toxic products for art, science and other classroom activities.
- Avoiding the use of toxic chemicals in all school activities, and carefully handling toxins when they are introduced into the school environment.

***Promoting Green Cleaning Activities:***

The FLACS Network will procure and use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products in accordance with *New York State Green Cleaning Law (Chapter 584 of the Laws of 2005)*. A list of green cleaning products and procurement information can be found at: <https://greencleaning.ny.gov/Products.asp>.

***Preventing Bus Idling:***

Given that vehicle exhaust is an important cause of asthma symptoms and other health problems among New York City schoolchildren, the FLACS Network will cut down on this problem by ensuring full compliance with New York City law, which prohibits buses from idling for more than a minute when adjacent to a school building. See New York City Administrative Code § 24-163(f).

***Promoting Healthy School Repair, Maintenance, and Construction Practices:***

The FLACS Network will ensure that all custodial staff are given the training and tools to perform school repairs and maintenance operations in a manner that fully protects the health of students and staff.

When major school construction projects take place, the FLACS Network's Wellness Team will work closely with the network to plan and monitor school construction activities to protect school health. The Wellness Team will ensure that the entire school community is educated about how to protect the health of students and staff during construction work.

***Promoting Environmental Sustainability and Stewardship:***

The FLACS Network will strive to decrease their environmental impact by promoting sustainable practices such as:

- Ensuring full compliance with recycling laws. For information on recycling practices in schools, consult the NYC website: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycwasteless/html/recycling/schools.shtml>
- Purchasing energy-efficient lighting and other appliances.
- Purchasing environmentally-friendly and recycled school supplies, and avoiding products that contain toxins. A good resource to use for green purchasing is the Green Schools Initiative: <http://www.greenschools.net/>
- Implementing water conservation measures.
- Teaching the importance of environmental stewardship to students

## **VIII. Staff Wellness**

***Supporting Staff in Health and Wellness Activities*** - The FLACS Network will encourage its staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The FLACS Network CEO and principals will work with a group of staff to develop, promote, and oversee a multi-faceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle.

***Staff as the Behavior Model for Students*** - Staff should understand that their health and wellness behavior are the model all students and should refrain from engaging activities that go actively the components of this policy. For example, staff should refrain from consuming foods that are prohibited to students in the presence of students, and school celebrations and staff meetings should emphasize healthy foods when possible.

## **IX. Monitoring and Policy Review**

The FLACS Network Wellness Team will review this policy and its success annually at the end of every school year. At the review period, the Wellness Team may suggest revisions to the policy based on the network's needs.

## **Inquiries**

Inquiries pertaining to the FLACS Network Wellness Policy should be addressed to:

Renee Willemsen-Goode  
14 West 170th Street  
Bronx, NY 10452

**This Wellness Policy has been approved by:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Marilyn Calo, FLACS Network CEO
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evelyn Centeno, FLACS I principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lourdes Arroyo, FLACS II principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Andrea Hernandez, FLACS III principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jillian Cuevas, FLACS II physical education teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jasmine Velazquez, FLACS III dance teacher
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eddie de la Rosa, FLACS I health instructor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bennett Finns, FLACS I chef
- \_\_\_\_\_ Renee Willemsen-Goode, FLACS Network Director of Data and Assessment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Kevin Wyman, FLACS I Physical Education teacher