

## **VALLEY CHARTER SCHOOLS WELLNESS POLICY**

### **Introduction:**

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all schools with federally funded school meal programs develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-2007 school years (PL 108.265 Section 204). Congress determined that there was a need for each school to develop a local wellness policy to address a number of concerns. The number of overweight children in the U.S. has grown dramatically while children's physical activity is declining as they get older. These trends have health and financial consequences. A healthy school environment goes beyond the school meals served in the lunchroom. A healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight requires a combination of healthy food choices and an appropriate amount of physical activity. The healthy, physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

### **Nutrition:**

- The Valley Charter Schools Child Nutrition Program is obliged to conform to federal, state, and local requirements. The Child Nutrition Program is accessible to all children. Each child receives a meal benefit form at the beginning of each school year. Parents or guardians may apply for meal benefits at any time during the school year. The meals provided at Valley Charter Schools shall follow the guidelines set forth by the USDA through the National School Lunch Program. Valley Charter School guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Foods of minimal nutritional value and candy will not be given to students during the school day. Students are encouraged to bring snacks and lunches that are healthy and may not bring candy or soda/sports drinks to school.
- Staff will notify parents ahead of time of school celebrations that involve food.
- There are no fried foods offered through the Valley Charter School lunch program.
- The milk choices available are skim and/or 1% white milk.
- Students, who do not choose to purchase milk, may drink water or a 100% juice drink brought from home. No soft drinks, sports drinks, or chocolate milk will be permitted during snack or lunch.

### **Physical Education and Activity:**

- Participation in the physical education program shall be required of all students.
- Physical activity will be integrated across curricula and throughout the school day. Movement can be made a part of science, math, social studies, and language arts. To promote learning, staff will incorporate physical activity within the school day with the goal of limiting extended periods of inactivity.
- Students at all grade levels will have access to a physical education curriculum which includes opportunities to learn, meaningful content, and appropriate instruction.
- Physical education classes shall have a student/teacher ratio similar to other classes.

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- Adequate equipment is available for all students to participate in physical education.
- The school provides a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
- The physical education teacher will require students to run laps, or complete pushups as a part of the physical education program. However, no school personnel may use physical activity as a form of punishment.

#### **Eating Environment:**

- The students shall be provided with adequate time to eat their meals. The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided with twenty minutes to eat their lunch from the time the student is seated.
- The lunch period will be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible. Food is not used as a reward or punishment for student behaviors.
- Dining areas have enough space for seating all students.
- The school will provide students the opportunity to wash their hands before and after eating meals or snacks.
- The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals.

#### **Healthy and Safe Environment:**

- School buildings and grounds, structures, and equipment shall meet all current health and safety standards.
- Valley Charter Schools shall maintain an environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs.

#### **Nutrition Education:**

- Nutrition education will be integrated into other areas of the school curriculum such as math, science, language arts, and social studies.
- Nutrition education will involve sharing information with families and the broader community to positively impact students and the health of the community. Valley Charter Schools will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health and nutrition and to provide nutritious meals for their families.
- Valley Charter Schools will provide parents helpful hints relating to childhood obesity, diet, and health activities. In addition, Valley Charter Schools will display information posters that illustrate concerns associated with obesity, diet, and healthful activities.

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### Daily Recess Period:

- Valley Charter Elementary School will provide daily outdoors recess, during which the school will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of adequate space and equipment. Exceptions may be made by the principal for circumstances such as shortened days, special events, and altered schedules.
- Recess must be supervised. Appropriate equipment and space is to be made available so that students can be physically active and safe.
- Staff will be encouraged to limit using recess time for students to make up work or as a time to administer discipline to a maximum of ten minutes. A students' recess period may be used as a time for disciplinary action at the discretion of Valley Charter Elementary School's principal.

### Food Safety/Food Security:

- All foods made available on campus will comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.

### Foods and Beverages:

- Valley Charter School encourages administrators and teachers to consider wellness issues and student allergies when planning incentive and promotional activities.
- Valley Charter School staff will discourage students from sharing their food or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's' diets.

### Compliance:

- The Valley Charter School principal is responsible for providing annual notification of this policy and procedure to staff, students, and parents.
- The principal will ensure that opportunities for physical activity are provided during the school day in accordance with this policy.
- Parents may, upon approval from the administration, hold food fundraisers after the end of each school day, on school holidays, or weekends.
- Food provided free as refreshments for potlucks, parties, picnics, teacher appreciation luncheons or breakfasts are not subject to this policy. However, healthy food choices are recommended.
- Food and Nutrition Service Department personnel and the principal will ensure that all food and beverages made available to students in school or through school-sponsored events are in compliance with this policy.

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### Staff Wellness:

- Valley Charter Schools is encouraged to offer educational activities for school staff members on healthy lifestyle behaviors, eating, physical activity, and injury prevention.
- Valley Charter Schools encourages staff to live a well-balanced life. Encouragement of staff members to set medical appointments for screening for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases.

### Monitoring and Review Policy:

- The Wellness Committee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the Wellness Committee. The Wellness Committee is comprised of the Executive Director, parents, teachers, and student leaders. The meetings are posted on the school websites and are open to the public.
- School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within food service areas and will report on this matter to the principal(s) and the Wellness Committee. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USDA Administrative Review findings and any resulting changes.
- The Wellness Committee will develop a summary report periodically on the schoolwide compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from the schools. That report will be provided to the school board, and also distributed to the Parent Faculty Council, school principals, and school health services personnel.
- Schools will conduct an assessment of the wellness policies every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the schools will review the 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. Valley Charter Schools will revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

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