

Local Wellness Policy

Statement of Commitment

The Learning Center! is committed to creating and sustaining a healthy school environment that supports student achievement and well-being by encouraging the development of lifelong wellness practices such as healthy eating and physical activity.

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Every year, all students, K-8th, shall receive nutrition education integrated into the curriculum that teaches the knowledge, skills, and values needed to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition education information shall be offered throughout the school campus including, but not limited to, school dining commons and classrooms.

TLC! will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is aligned with current North Carolina Healthful Living Essential Standards;
- Is part of health education classes, as well as 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; and
- Includes training for teachers and other staff.

Nutrition Standards

The following is the Nutrition Standard for all food served or consumed at The Learning Center! including, but not limited to, cafeteria, snacks, celebrations, fundraising, classrooms (including parties and educational activities), and vending machines.

The Learning Center! believes that foods and beverages available to students at the school should support the health curriculum and promote optimal health. The school promotes the use of whole foods, sustainable agriculture, and local farmers to the extent feasible, and

allowed under current laws and regulations. Nutrition standards adopted by the school for all foods and beverages sold to students, including foods and beverages provided as reimbursable school meals, vending machines, or other venues, will comply with all applicable state and federal laws with the goal of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

The school will encourage students to make food choices based on the most current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Board of Directors shall delegate the monitoring of all food and beverages sold or served to students, including those available outside the federally regulated child nutrition programs. Food and beverages that undermine the school's policy for promoting a healthy school environment are not allowed.

Smart Snacks

All foods offered by the school will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks standards. To qualify under the Smart Snack nutrition standards:

- Grain products must contain 50 percent or more whole grains; or
- Have the first ingredient be a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein; or
- Be a combination food containing at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit or vegetable; and
- All food must meet the nutrient standards for calories, sodium, sugar, and fats.

The Smart Snack guide for nutrient standards:

- Calories: 200 or less for snack; 350 or less for entrée
- Sodium: 200 mg or less for snack; 480 mg or less for entrée
- Total Fat: 35% of calories or less for snack; 35% of calories or less for entrée
- Saturated Fat: Less than 10% of calories for snack; less than 10% of calories for entrée
- Trans Fat: 0 g for snack; 0 g for entrée
- Sugar: 35% or less by weight for snack; 35% or less by weight for entrée

Smart Snacks in schools aid in improving students' health and well being by increasing their consumption of healthful foods. This also creates an environment where healthy eating habits can develop.

National School Lunch and Breakfast Program

Foods and beverages available, sold, consumed, or otherwise provided as part of a federally regulated child nutrition program will meet all applicable regulations for components and quality. Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will be appealing and attractive to children, and served in clean and pleasant settings. The meals will offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, low fat (1%) and fat-free milk, and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA). One hundred percent

(100%) of grains served shall be whole grain, unless unavailable, and an appropriate waiver is granted. In any case, the quality of grains served will meet, or exceed, the minimum required by current regulations.

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, The Learning Center! will:

- Operate a universal free School Breakfast Program;
- Utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation;
- Notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program; and
- Encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast, either at home or at school, for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means

The Learning Center! 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. Toward this end, the school may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

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Dining Environment and Scheduling

The Learning Center! will provide:

- A clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students;
- Enough space, staff, and serving areas to ensure that all students have access to school meals with minimal wait time (Students will have at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch);
- Drinking water available in all classrooms and common areas;
- Drinking water available to all students during meal service, without cost or restriction;
- Lunch scheduled as near to the middle of the day as possible;
- Activities, such as tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities shall not be scheduled during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;

- Access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks will be provided to all students; and
- The school will 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 the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility. The Nutrition Director will monitor and document professional education content and hours for all employees of the school nutrition team.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Nutrition Standards

The Nutrition Director shall establish quality indicators that will be used to measure the implementation of the policy in the school. These measures shall include, but not limited to:

- An analysis of the nutritional content of meals served;
- An evaluation of the diversity of food items within menus;
- Student participation rates in school meal programs;
- Monitoring of the quality of foods and beverages used in fundraisers, celebrations, and other venues outside the school meal programs; and
- Feedback from food service personnel, school staff, school health councils, parents/guardians, students, and any other appropriate persons

Snacks

The Nutrition Director, or other designee of the Board of Directors, shall monitor all snack vendors to ensure that they provide healthy food and beverage choices that comply with the policy's purpose, and USDA regulations, in all venues. Snacks served during the school day, or in after-school care or enrichment programs, will make a positive contribution to the student's diet and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks, and water or milk as the primary beverage.

Rewards

The Learning Center! shall discourage using food as a reward and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. At school, home, and throughout the community, children are offered food as a reward for “good” behavior. Often these foods have little or no nutritional value but are inexpensive and can bring about short-term behavior change. The following are some alternatives for students to enjoy instead of being offered food as a reward at school:

*Watch a video *Read outdoors *Have extra art time *Teach the class *Play a computer game *Read to a younger class *Listen to music while working *Walk with a teacher during lunch *Eat lunch outdoors *Eat lunch with a teacher *Dance to favorite music in the classroom *Get stickers, pencils and other supplies *Receive a video store or movie theater coupon *Take a trip to the treasure box (non food items)

Food Safety

CDC currently estimates that 1 in 6 Americans (approximately 48 million people) will become sick by food-borne illness, resulting in 3,000 deaths each year. Young children are particularly vulnerable to food-borne illness. Child Nutrition services will follow local, state, and federal food safety guidelines, provide necessary training to staff, and disseminate information to reduce the possibility of food-borne illness.

Marketing in Schools

The marketing of food products during school hours is limited to school nutrition services, and under the authority of the Nutrition Director.

Examples of disallowed marketing techniques include the following:

- Logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment;
- Educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward;
- Programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low nutrition food products;
- In-school television, such as Channel One;
- Free samples or coupons for low nutrition food products;
- Foods of low nutrition value in self-identifying containers (such as cups, wrappers, bags, and other containers from fast food restaurants); and
- Fundraising activities for any food items.

Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are therefore allowable) include:

- Coupons for discount gym memberships;

- Periodic food promotions to encourage taste-testing of healthy new foods being introduced on the menu, under the supervision of Nutrition Director;
- Student/faculty food preference surveys to develop and revise school lunch menu items

Lunches and Snacks from Home

Parents of students who bring lunch from home are strongly encouraged to send healthy, well-balanced meals that meet their child’s nutritional needs. *Students should not bring sodas, energy drinks, or candy to school.* For further guidance, parents should refer to the article “Packing in Health” under the Nutrition tab on the school website. Parents without internet access may request a hard copy of this document.

Classroom Celebrations

Classrooms should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. *Foods and beverages donated for use in a classroom celebration should be shelf stable, as refrigerators are not available for storing foods not originating from the nutrition service department.*

At least one fruit or non-fried vegetable option should be available at classroom or school-wide celebrations. Such items could include, but are not limited to:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables;
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice;
- 100% juice diluted with still or sparkling water, with no added sweeteners;
- Cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and
- Cooked, dried, or canned vegetables.

Allowed beverages include still or carbonated water without added flavors or sweeteners, low fat or skim milk, or fruit and/or vegetable juices as above. There is no portion limit recommendation on still and sparkling water without additives. Juice and milk serving sizes should be limited to 8 fluid ounces.

The serving size of snacks offered during celebrations should be planned to not exceed:

- 200 calories a serving;
- Less than 35% total fat, less than 10% saturated fat, and zero trans fat*;
- Less than 35% by weight of sugar*; and
- Less than 230 mg of sodium.

*Mixtures containing nuts, seeds, and dried fruit are exempt from fat and sugar limits, as long as there are no additional ingredients.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Students should be discouraged from sharing foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times to reduce the possibility of exposure to allergens, or other foods not allowed in the diet due to medical or religious restriction.

Fundraising

To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, school fundraising activities will either not involve food, or will always offer some selections that meet the nutrition standards contained within this policy. Fundraising activities will be reviewed by the Director, or designee, for consistency with the Wellness Policy.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances)

Such events shall always offer some selections that meet the nutrition standards contained within this policy. Sale of food at events which are not school-related (e.g. and outside agency rents the school property and holds an event featuring a food sale) are not subject to school nutrition policy.

Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities

The school shall offer daily physical education opportunities to all students that include the components of a quality physical education program. Physical education shall equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for lifelong physical activity.

The school shall also offer other opportunities for physical activities, both organized and unstructured, beyond daily physical education class.

The Learning Center! will provide a physical education and physical activities program which will:

K-8th:

- Be aligned with the North Carolina Physical Education Content Standards and Benchmarks;
- Include opportunities for students of all abilities;

- Have as its core goal the fostering of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for students to engage in lifelong physical activity;
- Engage students in purposeful activity for the majority of physical education class time;
- Positively influence personal confidence and social skill development; and
- Provide opportunity for physical activity apart from the structured physical education class time.

K-3rd:

- Provide physical education instruction periods of 150 minutes per week;
- Provide daily play breaks of 15 minutes each; and
- Include a 1st and 3rd quarter fitness evaluation with assessment information to be sent home to parents.

4th-8th:

- Provide physical education instruction periods of 150-225 minutes per week;
- Provide daily 5-10 minute physical activity breaks at appropriate intervals; and
- Include each student in individual quarterly fitness evaluation and goal setting.

Other School-based Supports and Activities to Promote Wellness

The Learning Center! will provide a healthy school environment which promotes wellness among students and staff members.

Dining Environment and Scheduling

The Learning Center! will provide:

- A clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students;
- Enough space, staff, and serving areas to ensure that all students have access to school meals with minimal wait time;
- Drinking water available in all classrooms and common areas;
- Drinking water available to all students during meal service, without cost or restriction;
- Adequate time to enjoy healthy foods; and
- Lunch scheduled as near to the middle of the day as possible.

Rewards and Punishments

The Learning Center! will refrain from:

- Using foods as a reward (see “rewards” under Nutrition Standards section for suitable alternative reward ideas);
- Denying students participation in physical activity as a form of punishment;
- Denying student participation in physical activity in order to make up class time; and
- Using physical activity as a punishment.

Air Quality

Recognizing that scented products may trigger asthma and chemical sensitivity reactions in students and staff, which can contribute to learning and breathing problems, the school will monitor the use of fragrances on campus. The Institute of Medicine’s report, *Clearing the Air: Asthma and Indoor Air Exposure*, concludes, “avoidance is clearly the most straightforward means of addressing problematic exposures for sensitive individuals.” The school shall monitor the use of fragrances and encourage non-toxic options.

Role Models

The Learning Center! strongly encourages all school employees to serve as a role model by following and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Students need to be able to observe adults making healthy food choices and engaging in physical activity.

Staff Wellness

The Learning Center! school wellness team will seek out cost effective staff wellness activities.

Trainings

Teachers and Child Nutrition staff members will be provided with appropriate training and professional development activities in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and education, and healthy living.

Implementation and Measurement

The Wellness Team

The Wellness Team will consist of representatives from at least the following school groups:

1. Nutrition staff
2. Teachers using Healthy Living curriculum
3. Parents
4. Physical Education teacher

5. Students

The current team and the school director will make recommendations for additional members as needed.

The wellness team will meet at least four times a year for periodic review addressing how well the school is meeting or making progress toward the specific goals outlined in the wellness plan. Any revisions made to the wellness policy that the team deems necessary will be approved by the board.

In addition to regular meetings, members may also be asked to contribute time in researching methods and resources relating to wellness. This time commitment will be kept as minimal as possible.

The team will operate by consensus.

Wellness Team Leader

The Wellness Team Leader will be appointed by the school director.

The School Wellness Policy

The Wellness Policy will be revised as needed by the school wellness team. Revisions will be submitted to the board for approval and published to the school community.

The Wellness Team will draft a new policy every 3 years. A draft of the new policy will be available for review and comment by the school community for a minimum of one month before being submitted to the board for approval. The draft will be published via the school website under the Nutrition tab and the school blog. Hard copies will be available through the school office. Parents will be sent emails encouraging their input and participation of the wellness policy. The new policy will be submitted to the school board for approval.

Annual Action Plans

Each school year the wellness team will formulate an action plan which will consist of several measurable goals designed to carry forward the larger goals of the overall Wellness Policy. The Wellness Team Leader will use the CDC's School Health Index online assessment tool to keep track of progress and generate annual progress reports that show to what extent policy goals are being met and where we are falling behind.

The annual action plan will include:

- Clearly stated, measurable goals;

- An implementation timeline; and
- A method of measuring effectiveness.

These annual action plans will be developed by the wellness team but may include such items as:

- Test strategies to increase vegetable consumption (e.g. Taste test) and reduce food waste;
- Use formative and summative assessments to understand baseline knowledge of healthy living in students, and continue to assess progress as Healthy Living curriculum is implemented;
- Measure involvement in health-related activities such as Walk & Talk and Circuit Training;
- Measure changes in BMI over time; and
- Develop and monitor a student-led initiative.

The annual action plan goals and data relating to the effectiveness of those goals will be published to The Learning Center! community and general public via the school website and blog. The team will submit to the school board an annual summary of its initiatives and their effectiveness.