

St. James School
Wellness Policy
2024-2025

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Evansville are 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, it is the policy of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Evansville that:

- The schools will engage students, parents, teachers, food service staff, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades Preschool-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *US Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Staff will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students, and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

To achieve these goals:

I. School Wellness Committee – St. James School will form a Wellness Committee to serve as a source to develop, implement, monitor, review, and revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The Wellness Committee will meet at minimum twice annually, with an agenda and minutes to be kept at the school.

The Wellness Committee will consist of individuals from the following areas:

- School administrator
- PE teacher and interested faculty and staff members
- Students
- Parent(s) or School Council member
- Cafeteria or child nutrition manager
- Health Care/ Nutritionist/ Certified Dietician professional
- Interested individuals from the general public who have vested interest in our school.

II. USDA Requirements for School Meals- The school breakfast and lunch programs will:

- Meet, at minimum, nutrition requirements established by USDA for federally funded programs, as found on the USDA website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>
- Provide access to and emphasis on high quality foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and water.
- Be appealing and attractive to students.
- Be served in clean and pleasant surroundings,
- Provide students with adequate time to eat (**the School Nutrition Association recommends at least twenty minutes for lunch**)

- Promote school meal participation with taste tests, contests, etc., and make available a nutritional analysis of menu items.
- Parents will be provided information regarding eligibility and application for participation in the free/reduced price meals.

III. Nutritional Guidelines for All Food and Beverages Sold- Food and beverages sold outside of the Child Nutrition Program, including a 'la carte and vending machine items, will be approved by either the school's Food Service Director or the School Wellness Committee, and will meet the following guidelines:

- Beverages and Foods
 - Water (flavored and non-calorie sweeteners)
 - Fruit and vegetable juices
 - Fruit based drinks containing at least 50% fruit juice
 - Low fat unflavored or fat-free flavored fluid milk
 - Sports drinks (middle school only)
 - Individual food items must meet USDA Smart Snack standards
 - Vending machines dispensing either food or beverages are not accessible to students during the school day.
 - Sale of foods and/or beverages containing caffeine or non-nutritive sweeteners is prohibited during the school day.
- Fundraising
 - 50% of the school fundraising activities will not involve food.

IV. Nutritional Guidelines for Non-Sold Foods and Beverages

- Preschool programs and after school care programs will serve snacks that will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health and will emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and the importance of water as a beverage.
- Celebrations will be limited that involve food during the school day. Parents will be encouraged to provide healthy options for these celebrations.
- Rewards- It is strongly recommended that schools not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior.

V. Food and Beverage Marketing

- St. James School will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition guidelines for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.
- Promotional materials that are distributed during the school day will not contain images or wording for food or beverage items that do not meet the nutritional guidelines for food or beverages sold individually.
- Non-compliant food marketing will not be used in St. James School.

VI. Nutrition Education

- St. James School will follow health education curriculum standards and guidelines as stated by the Indiana Department of Education.
- Nutrition education will be taught by a licensed teacher in grades K-8. In self-contained classrooms, teachers holding an appropriate license may teach their own health and nutrition education, as well as other required subjects as their license allows.
- Nutrition education will be taught in grades K-8 as part of a sequential, comprehensive, health curriculum designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote and protect health. Nutrition education will be designed to help students learn:
 - Nutrition knowledge may include the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, the use and misuse of dietary supplements, safe food preparations, handling and storage, caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/ exercise), and adequate fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy.
 - Nutrition related skills may include planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, critically evaluating nutrition information, and commercial food advertising.
- Teachers are encouraged to take advantage of professional development opportunities when offered.
- ADDITIONAL SCHOOL GOAL: Health Fair in the Spring of 2025

VII. Nutrition Promotion

- Cafeteria staff will introduce students to new food choices and encourage students to try new foods.
- The cafeteria can be used to display nutrition education posters and food facts to encourage interest in healthy foods.
- The School Wellness Committee will explore and identify at least two of the Smarter Lunchroom techniques as listed at: www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/smarter-lunchrooms-strategies to implement in order to promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students.
- St. James School shall schedule mealtimes so there is minimum disruption by bus schedules, recess, and other special programs or events, thereby allowing sufficient time for student to eat (at least 20 minutes for lunch).
- St. James School will provide the Nutrition Nuggets newsletter to parents monthly both digitally and on the web-site.
- ADDITIONAL SCHOOL GOAL: Cafeteria manager hosts “theme days” to get the kids excited about school lunch.

VIII. Physical Activity

- Classroom Setting
 - Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle.
 - Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
 - Teachers should discourage extended periods of inactivity.
- Physical Education Class
 - All students will receive regular physical education by a licensed PE teacher.

- Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Professional development will be available to PE teachers through the diocese and other meetings.
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- Recess
 - All students will have at least 20 minutes of supervised recess per day.
 - Physical activity will not be withheld as a punishment.
- ADDITIONAL SCHOOL GOAL: Students walk laps daily in the gym before school begins.

IV. Additional School-Based Activities

- Faculty and staff will have the opportunity to be involved in wellness programs and/or efforts to build effective school health initiatives.
- Cafeteria staff will be hired with the understanding that they are responsible to adhere to the policies the school has in place.
- St. James School will keep students safe who ride their bike or walk to school.
- Nutrition education and wellness will be offered to students, parents, and staff through any of the following: Health fairs, seminars, newsletters, handouts, website, and team nutrition.
- ADDITIONAL SCHOOL GOAL: Fall Walk-a-Thon and Spring Health Fair

X. Evaluation

- The school administrator, along with the School Wellness Committee, will complete the Diocesan Wellness Policy Checklist and Indiana Department of Education Wellness Policy Evaluation Checklist, regarding school-wide compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies on an annual basis. The completed diocesan checklist will be submitted to the Catholic Schools Office by June. 1
- Every three years, the Wellness Committee will complete the USDA WellSAT and share with the Catholic Schools Office.

XI. Person Responsible

- The school administrator will ensure compliance with the established Wellness Policy.
- The preschool director will ensure compliance with the established Wellness Policy in the early learning setting.

XII. Communication

- Progress reports should be shared annually with the public using any of the following channels of communication: Newspaper, newsletter, web site, and other forms of communication.
- Progress reports ensure transparency by including: Web address of the Wellness Policy, description of the school's goals and progress, and contact information of the Wellness Committee chair.

June 2024