



## **WELLNESS PROGRAM**

**SY 2023-2024**

### **I. PHILOSOPHY and COMMITMENT**

The Sarasota County Schools believes that children and youth who begin each day as healthy individuals can learn more effectively and are more likely to complete their formal education. SKY Academy 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. All students enrolled in SKY Academy shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoy physical activity choice for a lifetime.

The District supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices, by facilitating learning through the support of good nutrition, healthy food choices available at school, physical activity and health practices. The goal is to educate children in order that they will make healthy informed decisions, and to see positive results of those decisions.

This Wellness Policy establishes guidelines and goals for nutrition, physical activity, student wellness, and a plan for implementation. This plan is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources and to equitably serve the wellness needs of the students.

This policy serves as a tool for establishing a healthy school nutrition environment at Sarasota County Schools. The policy establishes guidelines and techniques for promoting a well-rounded approach to health, nutrition, and overall student wellness that is sensitive to individual and community needs.

The Food Service Director and other qualified nutrition professionals will recommend and monitor that the objectives of the Wellness Policies are being met.



## **RATIONALE**

The link between nutrition, physical activity, and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. According to the School Health guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity published by the Center for the Disease Control; healthy eating and physical activity essential for healthy weight, are also linked to reduced risk for many chronic diseases, including Type 2 Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Cancer (School Health Guidelines 5). Schools have the responsibility to help students learn, establish, and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns. Well-planned and effectively implements school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health, as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school (Association between School Based Physical Activity, 8-9). Staff wellness is also an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school staff can serve as daily role models for healthy behaviors.

### **Sarasota County Schools acknowledge that:**

- A. Children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.
- B. Good health fosters student attendance and education.
- C. Heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, which include unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity and obesity, are often established in childhood.
- D. Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity (School Health Guidelines, 5).
- E. Community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.



**Therefore, it is the commitment of Sarasota County that:**

- F. The school will engage students, parents, teachers, and food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition, and physical activity policies. All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- G. Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutritional recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- H. During the school day, marketing of food products shall be limited to those foods and beverages which meet the Smart Snack requirements.
- I. Food and beverages served during the school day include a variety of healthy choices that are of excellent quality, appealing to the students and served at the proper temperature.
- J. Fresh fruit is available at each meal.
- K. Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing food that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- L. All schools in the district will participate in the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program, and qualifying schools will participate in the After-School Snack Program, and the Summer Food Service Program.
- M. 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.
- N. The school supports healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus by implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal program.
- O. If a la carte, vending or other food sales are available, they should include a variety of choices of nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy items, and water. All packaged snacks and beverages sold during the school day must meet or exceed USDA Smart Snack requirements. Food and Nutrition Service Administrators participate in assessing the nutritional value of foods available in vending machines and monitoring compliance to Smart Snack rules.



- P. Drinking water and hand sanitizing facilities should be always conveniently available for students.

## **GOALS**

### **II. NUTRITION EDUCATION**

- A. Nutrition education is provided to students through a planned, sequential curriculum via a variety of outlets including classroom, cafeteria, and afterschool programs.
- B. Nutrition education involves the sharing of information with families and the community through menus, newsletters, parent meetings, the Food and Nutrition Services website, and other District- Wide wellness activities. Information is also shared via social media.
- C. The classroom serves as a learning laboratory to teach and practice good nutrition, incorporating nutrition promotions and foods from school gardens to enhance the experience.
- D. Nutritional Education allows the students and parents to make informed decisions about the foods they eat and or prepare. It also allows them to see how those decisions help to reduce obesity, and other chronic health issues due to unhealthy eating.

### **III. NUTRITION GUIDELINES for ALL FOODS on CAMPUS**

Food choices reflect good nutrition, appropriate food choices. Food safety for students and staff contributes to the development of overall health and well-being.

- A. All foods and beverages sold or served on campus, including the sales of competitive foods, vending machine food options, and food of minimal nutritional value shall comply with nutritional requirements and requirements established by federal. State, and local laws/regulations.
- B. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than regulations and guidelines issued by the USDA.
- C. School meals are made accessible to all students through a variety of meal delivery strategies and time periods.



- D. Eligible students are encouraged to participate in the free/reduced price meal program and are provided with the appropriate materials to apply for such benefits.
- E. Summer nutrition programs are offered and remain consistent with Florida Statutes and Standards established by USDA.
- F. Guidelines are established and provided to all school-sites for snacks and other foods used for celebrations, school sponsored events and fundraising activities.
- G. Low-fat and fat-free milk, a variety of fruits and vegetables, and whole-grain products are emphasized in menu development.
- H. Fresh foods are emphasized through the utilization of agricultural programs, including Farm to School, and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Programs.

#### **IV. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Physical education programs are taught by certified physical education teachers who emphasize physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.

- A. Physical education curriculum incorporates the following:
  - 1. Promotion of positive attitudes toward wellness and physical activity
  - 2. Safety guidelines
  - 3. Responsible behavior in physical activity settings
  - 4. Appreciation for a variety of physical activities
  - 5. Understanding of the relationship between physical activity and wellness
  - 6. Encouragement of setting personal physical fitness goals
- B. Opportunities for physical activity may be scheduled before, during and after the school day to provide opportunities for participation by all students.
- C. Encourage families and the community to promote and participate in programs which support physical activity, such as Health Fairs, "Walking School Bus", Mile Clubs, and school-sponsored runs.
- D. Adequate equipment, and proper usage is available to all students, regardless of disabilities or impairments.
- E. Encouraging physical activity helps students to test their resilience, to see benefits and rewards, such as body strength, endurance, and the maintaining of healthy body weight to prevent illness associated with non-physical activity.



## **V. OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES**

- A. Facilities are made available to the community to promote wellness related activities (in compliance with School Board Rule 9.30).
- B. Collaboration with community agencies and organizations to promote wellness activities in the community is encouraged.
- C. Opportunities to encourage, engage students, staff, and the community to focus on wellness are demonstrated by offering health-focused activities and events on school campuses, which may include Health Screenings, Run Clubs and Field Days. These events will allow participants to see the benefits and rewards of healthy eating, and physical activity.

## **VI. WELLNESS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

- A. A Wellness Contact(s) at each school site is/are designated to assist with the implementation of the Local Wellness Policy.
- B. A Wellness Steering Committee is established and consists of representatives from the School Health Advisory Committee and the Nutrition Review Committee.
- C. The Wellness Steering Committee conducts on-going assessments of current nutrition guidelines and activities, nutrition education, physical activity, involvement of students, and other wellness related topics.
- D. The Wellness Steering Committee works with staff to provide a comprehensive wellness program based on the adopted goals and results of any initial assessments. The program will be continuously evaluated and updated for the best outcomes.
- E. The Wellness program shall meet the requirements of the National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, revised 2004, and the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010.
- F. The Wellness Program will adhere to the "Sarasota County Schools Wellness Procedures Manual".
- G. Review of the Smarter Luncheon tool and techniques will be reviewed each year.
- H. Stakeholders will be informed each year of the Wellness policy, it will be included on our website and parents will have an invitation in the Parent Handbook to review, make suggestions, and contact us if they want to participate in any aspect of the Wellness Policy.



## **VII. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Prepare and submit an annual report to the School Board regarding progress toward implementation of the School Wellness Policy and recommendations of revisions to the policy, as necessary.
2. Conduct a review of the progress toward the School Wellness Policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
3. The Nutrition Review Subcommittee will meet as needed to meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Guidelines.
4. Results of the tricentennial progress assessment will be made available on the website by positing the compliance tool results along with the Wellness Policy itself.
5. Annually the Wellness Policy will be posted on our website to ensure that people know it is the most up to date plan and that it has been reviewed.

## REFERENCES:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Health Guidelines to Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: MMWR 2011; 60 (No. RR-5):5, 11-12
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The association between School Based Physical Activity, including Physical Education, and Academic Performance, Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2010 (8-9).

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