

Nutrition and Physical Activity – 550.20

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PURPOSE: To insure the promotion of healthy students by supporting good nutrition and regular physical activity.

APPLICABILITY: All Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh

DEFINITIONS: Provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing appropriate lifelong behaviors.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

The Secretariat for Education, Department for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh promotes healthy students by supporting good nutrition and regular physical activity as part of the total learning environment. Schools are encouraged to provide a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The Catholic schools in the Diocese provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing appropriate lifelong behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy goals to positively influence a student’s understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

The Catholic schools in the Diocese are encouraged to support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students’ health status and academic performance. All foods available on school grounds and at school-sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the nutrition standards. Foods should be served with consideration toward nutritional integrity, variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging to ensure high-quality meals.

Schools are advised to 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 meals. Toward this end, the Schools are encouraged to utilize electronic identification and payment systems, promote the availability of meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving meals, such as “grab-and-go” or classroom breakfast.

The Department for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh has developed its local policy through the work of a committee comprised of representatives of the Principals Advisory Council, parents, leaders in food/exercise authority and employees. Locally, the principal will designate an individual to monitor implementation and evaluate the implementation of the policy.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines

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NUTRITION EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh will promote nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion, which

- is offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also 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 fruit, 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 physical activity;
- links with meal programs, other foods and nutrition-related community services.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Daily Physical Activity

The schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh will promote physical activity that:

- is daily (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 150 minutes a week for elementary students and 225 minutes a week for middle and high school students);
- is for all students in grades K-12 for the entire school year;
- includes students with disabilities, students with special health-care needs may be provided in alternative educational settings; and
- engages students in moderate to vigorous activity during at least 50 percent of physical education class time.

Daily Recess

Elementary schools should provide recess for students:

- is at least 20 minutes a day;
- is preferably outdoors;
- encourages moderate to vigorous physical activity – verbally and through the provision of space and equipment; and
- discourages extended period (i.e., periods of two or more hours of inactivity).

When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES

Integrating Physical Activity into Classroom Settings

For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond the physical education class. Toward that end, the schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh will:

- offer 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;
- discourage sedentary activities, such as watching television, playing computer games, etc.;
- provide opportunities for physical activity to be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- encourage classroom teachers to provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS AVAILABLE ON CAMPUS

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal law;
- offer a minimum of (3) fruits and (3) vegetable a day; and
- serve milk daily.

Schools should:

- engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods offered through the meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices; and
- share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. (The information could be made available upon request.)

Breakfast

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutrition needs and enhance their ability to learn, schools will be encouraged to:

- operate the breakfast program, to the extent possible;
- arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfasts for breakfast during morning break or recess, to the extent possible;
- notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program, where available; and
- encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials or other means.

Meal Times and Scheduling

Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are encouraged to:

- provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 am and 1 pm; should not schedule tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes unless students eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualification of Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the meal programs. As part of the Food Service Management's responsibility to operate a food service program, the Food Service Management will:

- provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals; and
- provide staff development programs that include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, nutrition managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Foods Sold Outside the Meal (e.g., vending, a la carte, sales)

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines student stores or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50 percent fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk and nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverages (defined by the USDA);
- **Not Allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain minimal amounts of caffeine).

Foods

A food item sold individually:

- kindergarten through fifth grade will have no more than (5) a la carte items in total;
- will have no more than 35 percent of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter and other nut butters) and 10 percent of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
- will have no more than 35 percent of its weight from added sugars;
- will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked good and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches and main dishes; and
- will include a choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold.

Examples: Food items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50 percent fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).

Portion Size

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

- one and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix nuts, seeds, dried fruit or jerky;
- one ounce for cookies
- two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels and other bakery items;
- four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water and milk; and
- the portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities during the instructional day will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. The Department for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh encourages fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks

Snacks served will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations. The Committee will make available a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel and parents.

If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards

Food will not be used as a reward for classroom or school activities unless the reward is an activity that promotes a positive nutrition message (i.e., guest chef, field trip to a farm or farmers market, etc.).

Celebrations

Schools should evaluate their celebrations practices that involve food during the school day.

Food Safety

All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines:

- All foods made available on campus 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.
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/servingsafr_chapter6.pdf
- For the safety and security of the food and facility, access to the food service operations are limited to child nutrition staff and authorized personnel.

Monitoring

In each school:

- the principal will ensure compliance with these policies in the school; and
- food service administration will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within food service areas and will report to the principal on this matter.