

Valley Academy Health and Wellness Policy

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 wellbeing. Healthy eating and physical activity are essential to reduce risk for many chronic diseases. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating and activity patterns. Well planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Staff wellness also is an integral part of a health school environment, since school staff can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

Goal

All students at Valley Academy Charter School will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All staff members at Valley Academy Charter School are encouraged to model healthful eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, Valley Academy adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines, other school based activities, and implementations. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources to equitably serve the needs and interest of all students, families, and staff, taking into consideration difference in culture.

This policy will be made available to our stakeholders on the school website, through staff training, and education of the students and families.

This policy may be updated to reflect new federal and state guidelines.

Nutrition Education

- The school cafeteria or eating area serves as a learning laboratory to support nutrition education through menu offerings and signage.
- The school will provide education for students, families, and staff to help them learn skills needed to practice lifelong healthy eating, through such things as fun assemblies, school gardening projects, and many others.
- The classroom, cafeteria, and other school venues provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits.

Promotion of Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines

- Encourage the increased consumption of a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grain and low fat dairy products. This includes all foods available at Valley Academy. By July 1, 2014, all foods must comply with the federal Smart Snacks Rule.
- Offer food and beverages outside the lunch and breakfast meal service which are a good source of nutrients, moderate in sodium, moderate or low in fat, and moderate in sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food and moderate in calories.
- Classroom celebrations should encourage healthy choices and portion control. Celebrations involving treat food should be limited to Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. During these three food parties, a healthy food option should also be offered alongside the treats. Students who bring treats for their birthday should be encouraged to bring non-food items or healthy snacks.
- Non-food rewards will be planned for classrooms that participate in the Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines.
- Vending machine items, if provided, and any onsite fundraising that will be selling food items, should be moderate in sodium, fat, and sugar. Drinks should be limited to water, 1% milk, and juices that are 100% juice with no sugar added. By July 1, 2014, all foods must comply with the federal Smart Snacks Rule.
- Strive to improve student nutrition behaviors on the school campus; include an increase of healthier meal choices by students to include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products.
- Serve school meals which meet the USDA nutrition standards for all meals as well as provide sufficient choices, including new foods and foods prepared in new ways to meet the taste preference of the students.
- Designated lunch periods for all students should offer sufficient time to enjoy eating healthy foods. Lunch periods will be scheduled near the middle of the school day when possible.
- Students shall be encouraged to test healthy food items with which they are not familiar to promote behavior change and healthy school meal consumption.
- Support healthy eating by utilizing the food service area as a learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings and signs supporting healthy eating.
- Food and beverages are not used as reward or punishment. Time scheduled for lunch should never be shortened or taken away.
- Provide student's opportunities to practice healthy habits – they can choose from an array of healthy food options, eat in relaxed and comfortable surroundings and enjoy daily physical activity.

Physical Activity

- Valley Academy will ensure that all students receive regular, age appropriate quality physical education.

- Provide within the school environment a safe enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.
- Provide, through physical education, safe and satisfying physical activity for all students, including those with special needs.
- Provide for fitness education and assessment to help students understand and improve or maintain their physical well-being.
- Promote the benefits of doing regular amounts of physical activity now and through life.
- Schools should ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well-maintained.
- Physical activity should be encouraged throughout the school day to help improve on-task behavior. Programs such as Take 10!, Instant Recess, and The Energizers are just a few ideas that teachers can utilize.
- Students will be encouraged to be physically moving during recess.

Goals for Other School Based Activities

- The before and after-school environment includes physical activity and promotes healthy eating habits as outlined above, including clubs, celebrations, fundraisers, meetings, and any other extra-curricular activities.
- Our goal is to provide a points system for classes, with fun rewards for healthy behaviors. We will also provide a “treasure chest” of non-food rewards that will replace food rewards.
- Valley Academy will participate in the Gold Medal School’s program.
- Valley Academy will provide services for students with nutrition-related health problems, referring them to appropriate services for counseling or medical treatment.
- Dining room supervisory staff (teachers, aids, janitorial staff, etc.) shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain a safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environment.

Staff as Role Models

- Train staff members who supervise student dining areas to encourage healthy eating patterns through positive experiences, allowing students adequate time to eat.
- Offer opportunities and encouragement for staff to model healthy eating habits.
- Provide ideas and resources for teachers, school administrators, students, foodservice professionals, and community members to serve as role models in practicing health eating and being physically active.

Food Safety/Food Security

- All foods made on campus will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines to prevent food illness in school.

- All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health, safe food preparation, handling and storage, drinking water, sanitation and workplace safety

Measuring Implementation

- Form a committee of shareholders to oversee and make recommendations for school wellness. This committee will be made up of parents, students, teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, the school board, and the general public. This committee will not exclude any person who wishes to be a member. The committee will be responsible for development, implementation, periodic review, and update of the wellness policy. The committee will meet at least quarterly in a public forum advertised to the school, on the school website, and by social media. This committee will report to Valley Academy's standing Accountability Committee, which reports to the Board on a monthly basis.
- Prepare and submit a semi-yearly report from the school's wellness committee to the Board's Accountability Committee regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.
- Periodically assess how well the policy is being managed and enforced.
- Conduct a semi-annual review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals and identify areas for improvement. This review will include a survey of school staff, parents, and students in order to provide a good sample of overall school wellness and compliance.