



MercyFirst
Wellness Policy
2023

MercyFirst Wellness Policy

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MercyFirst Wellness Policy

Preamble

MercyFirst (hereto referred to as the Agency) is committed to the optimal development of every residential client/student. The Agency believes that for residential clients/students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines the Agency's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all residential clients/students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Residential clients/Students in the Agency have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus and in group homes – in accordance with Federal and NYS nutrition standards;
- Residential clients/Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Residential clients/Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school hours;
- Programs are designed to engage residential clients/students in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote health and wellness;

- School and Agency staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the Agency in creating continuity between school, agency and other settings for residential clients/students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The Agency establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all residential clients/students, staff, group home and campus-based residences and campus school operated by and affiliated with the Agency. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below

I. Food Advisory Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The Agency will convene a representative Resident Food Advisory Committee (hereto referred to as the FAC) that meets at least four times per year but preferably on a monthly basis to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this Agency-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “Wellness Policy”).

The FAC membership will represent all school levels and include to the extent possible, but not be limited to: caregivers, students, representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., Campus Cafeteria Director; physical education teachers; health education teachers; campus health professionals (e.g., nurses, physicians and other allied health personnel who provide school health services), and mental health and social services staff [e.g., Clinician, psychologist, or social worker; and campus administrators]. When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators (SNAP-EDEDSNAP-Ed). To the extent possible, the FAC will include representatives from each cottage on campus and group homes and reflect the diversity of the agency programs.

Leadership

The Supervisor of Youth Development Services for Long Island Residential programs is responsible to schedule and convene the Food Advisory Committee at least four times (quarterly) a year.

The Policy & Compliance Manager is responsible to facilitate the development of and updates to the Wellness Policy and will ensure agency and school compliance with the policy.

Name	Title / Relationship to the School or Agency	Email address	Role on Committee
Toni Owens	Policy & Compliance Manager	towens@mercyfirst.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Karen Ball	Food Service Director	ballk@whitsons.com	Oversees the planning and provision of all meals
Elaine Frazier	Youth Development Supervisor	efrazier@mercyfirst.org	Convenes Food Advisory Committee

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The Agency will use the NYS Wellness Policy Assessment Tool to create an action plan that fosters consistent implementation, accountability and establishes the format for compliance and progress reports. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the agency campus and in group homes, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other activities that promote youth wellness.

This Wellness Policy and the progress reports can be found posted on the agency website: www.mercyfirst.org

Recordkeeping

The Agency will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the Wellness Policy in the Performance and Quality Improvement Department (PQI). Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Agency Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the Agency uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Agency Wellness Committee (AWC);
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the agency Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Agency Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The Agency will actively inform families of residential clients about basic information contained in this policy, any updates and implementation status at the point of intake and directs clients to the agency website to access and review the policy in its entirety. The Agency will post the policy on the Agency website: www.mercyfirst.org and will additionally make this information available via Agency-wide communications. The Agency will provide as much information as possible about the agency/school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the Agency's events or activities related to Wellness Policy implementation. Annually, the Agency will also publicize the name and contact information of the Agency leading and coordinating the committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the Agency will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which the campus-based school and residential sites under the jurisdiction of the Agency are in compliance with the Wellness Policy;

- The extent to which the Agency's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Agency's Wellness Policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Toni Owens, Policy & Compliance Manager, at towens@mercyfirst.org.

The FAC, in collaboration with the Chief Program Officer and the Executive Vice President of Integrated Health, will monitor agency's compliance with this Wellness Policy.

The Agency will actively notify residential clients and their families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The Wellness Policy Committee will review, update or modify the Wellness Policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as Agency priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The Agency is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Wellness Policy. The Agency will actively communicate ways in which representatives of AWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy through a variety of means appropriate for the Agency. The Agency will also inform clients and parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The Agency will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the Agency's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The Agency will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and

accomplished through means similar to other ways that the Agency communicates important school and agency information with parents.

The Agency will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the Wellness Policy annually, at a minimum. The Agency will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

Our Agency is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams transfat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements.

The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All eligible residential programs within the Agency participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All residential programs within the Agency are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all residents;
- Are appealing and attractive to residents;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The Agency offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.

- Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
- All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
- Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
- A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
- Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

In addition:

- Menus will be posted on the Agency intra-net.
- Menus will be reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The Agency child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Lunch will follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- The Agency will implement at least four of the following five Farm to School activities (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria; mark/circle the four activities the Agency plans to do):
 - Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;
 - Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;
 - School hosts a school garden;
 - School hosts field trips to local farms; and
 - School utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/ regional products.]

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

The Food Service Director and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The Agency will make drinking water available where meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health-safety standards.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The Agency is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are provided to students on the campus during the day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are provided.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The Agency will provide a list of healthy party ideas to staff and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. Rewards and incentives. The Agency will provide staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#). Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school/agency meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout school, classrooms, gymnasiums, cafeteria and living units. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by agency/school staff, parents, students and the community.

The Agency will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the Agency and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

Nutrition Education

The Agency will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The Agency will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders

- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The Agency is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The Agency strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on Agency property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the Agency is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the Agency to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages consistent with the Agency's Wellness Policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.¹⁵ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, Agency will replace or update scoreboards or other durable equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is financially possible over time so that items are in compliance with the marketing policy.)

- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by the Agency.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As the Agency/ reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the Agency Wellness Policy.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and the Agency is committed to providing these opportunities. The Agency will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). All schools in the Agency will be encouraged to participate in *Let's Move! Active Schools* (www.letsmoveschools.org) in order to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. The Agency will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the Agency will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The Agency will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

The Agency will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will

promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students are provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The Agency will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All Agency **secondary students** are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

The Agency/Campus-Based school physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades and the Agency/Campus-based School will require middle and high school students to take and pass at least one health education course. The Agency/Campus-based School will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool-down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan

- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

The Agency/Campus-based school recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The Agency/ Campus-based school recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

The Agency/ Campus-based school will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Active Academics

Agency/Campus-based teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

The Agency/ Campus-based school will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Agency/ Campus-based teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

The Agency offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The

Agency will encourage students to be physically active before and after school through physical activity clubs, physical activity in aftercare, intramurals or interscholastic sports.

Active Transport

In the community-based group homes, the Agency will support active transport to and from school, such as walking. The Agency will encourage this behavior by engaging in the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Promote activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week
- Instruction on walking safety provided to students
- Document the number of children walking to and from school

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The Agency will integrate wellness activities agency-wide, not just in the campus cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. The Agency will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

The Agency/Campus-based school will coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or the Agency's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the AWC/FAC.

All agency-sponsored events will adhere to the Wellness Policy guidelines. All agency-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

The Agency will look to develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this Wellness Policy's implementation. Existing

and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

The Agency will promote to caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in agency-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the “Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications” subsection, the Agency will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the Agency’s website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in agency-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The Agency will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The subcommittee leader’s name is Jesstine Baskerville, Assistant Director of Human Resources.

The Agency will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, such as walking, dealing with stress, weight reduction, lowering blood pressure, etc. The Agency promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

Professional Learning

When feasible, the Agency will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help Agency staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing Agency reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day – the time during, before and afterschool that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

Agency Wellness Policy Review Committee:2023

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