

St. Thomas the Apostle School Wellness Plan on Physical Activity and Nutrition

The primary goals of the St. Thomas the Apostle School's wellness program are to promote student health, reduce student overweight/obesity/underweight, facilitate student learning of lifelong healthy habits and increase student achievement. The following procedures will guide the implementation of the school's wellness program.

- St. Thomas the Apostle School will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the school-wide nutrition and physical activity procedures.
- All students in grades K-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 *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods 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.
- To the maximum extent practicable, St. Thomas the Apostle School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program).
- St. Thomas the Apostle School 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. Wellness Committee

St. Thomas the Apostle School wellness committee will consist of at least one (1): parent, student, nurse, and the food service representative. The principal of the school will serve as the wellness program coordinator. The wellness coordinator, in consultation with the wellness committee, will be in charge of implementation and evaluation of the program.

II. Nutrition Guidelines

It is the procedure of St. Thomas the Apostle School that most all foods and beverages made available on campus during the school day are consistent with the Missouri Eat Smart nutrition guidelines. Guidelines for reimbursable school meals will not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to law. St. Thomas the Apostle School will create procedures that address foods available to students throughout the school day in the following areas:

- A. National School Lunch Program
- B. Classroom parties, celebrations, fundraisers, rewards and school events
- C. Snacks served in after-school programs

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

1. be appealing and attractive to children;
2. be served in clean and pleasant settings;
3. meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal
4. offer a variety of fruits and vegetables¹
5. serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USD A); and
6. when possible serve whole grains.

St. Thomas the Apostle School will provide information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students upon request.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals

St. Thomas the Apostle School will 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 meals³.

Meal Times and Scheduling

St. Thomas the Apostle School:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks;
- will take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g. Orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutritional professionals in schools.⁴

¹ To the extent possible, St. Thomas the Apostle School will offer non-fried vegetable and fruit options each day and will offer different fruits and vegetables over the course of a week. St. Thomas the Apostle School is encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*

³ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or 'paid' meals.

⁴ School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USD A, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

St. Thomas the Apostle School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, St. Thomas the Apostle School will limit school fundraising activities that involve food and will emphasize the use of foods that meet appropriate nutrition and portion size standards. St. Thomas the Apostle School will encourage activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health. Whenever possible, fruits and vegetables will be used as a primary snack and water as the primary beverage. The school will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Rewards

St. Thomas the Apostle School will encourage teachers/staff not to use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet nutritional standards as rewards for academic performance or good behavior⁵, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations

St. Thomas the Apostle School will limit celebrations that involve food. Whenever possible, each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages.

School-sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances). Foods and beverages, that meet nutrition standards, will be offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day.

⁵ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual service plan (ISP).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion

St. Thomas the Apostle School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The school will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- 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 fruits, 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 energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise); and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

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 physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement 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, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate

Communications with Parents

St. Thomas the Apostle School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will send home nutrition information and provide nutrient analyses of school menus upon request. The school will encourage parents to pack healthy snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages.

The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, the school will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or foods and beverages sold individually.⁶ School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages⁷ is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-8

All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and an alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of approximately 60 minutes/week for K-3 and approximately 60-90 minutes/week for 4-8) for the entire school year. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess

Students in K-8 will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which students will be encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity through verbal communication and through the provision of space and equipment.

The school will discourage extended periods (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, students will be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

⁶ Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

⁷ Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

Physical Activity After School

St. Thomas the Apostle School will offer extracurricular physical activity programs (i.e., Parochial Athletic League PAL). A variety of activities will be offered to meet the needs and abilities of students.

After-school childcare will provide and encourage- verbally and through the provision of space, equipment, and activities—daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

Physical Activity and Punishment

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

School playground will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Review

Monitoring

The school principal or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report this matter to the school principal. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USD A School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and resulting changes. If the school has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the school will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Review

St. Thomas the Apostle School will assess the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and procedures.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review procedures, and assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. The schools will, as necessary, revise the wellness procedures and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.