

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER SCHOOL'S
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION
WELLNESS POLICY

We believe:

- **children need access to healthy foods and physical activities in order to grow, learn, and thrive;**

- **good health fosters student attendance and positive education outcomes;**

- **obesity rates are increasing in children and adolescents, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;**

- **unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity are major risk factors for heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes;**

St. Francis Xavier School is committed to providing a school environment promoting children's health, well-being, and ability to learn through healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of St. Francis Xavier School that:

- we will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, and health professionals in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing our nutrition and physical activity policies.**
- all students in grade K-8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.**
- food and beverages served at our 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, within our budgetary constraints; and will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.**
- we will participate in the available federal school meal programs, such as the National School Lunch Program.**
- we 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.**

I. Wellness Committee

St. Francis Xavier School's Wellness Committee will develop, implement, and monitor our school nutrition and physical activity policies. The Wellness Committee will consist of individuals representing our school and community, including parents, school food authorities, teachers, and health professionals.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served at School

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch program will:

- **be appealing and attractive to children;**
- **be served in clean and pleasant settings;**
- **meet nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations;**
- **offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;**
- **serve only low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free milk, and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA);**
- **make water available at all lunches; and**
- **ensure that served grains are whole grain.**

St. Francis Xavier School will engage students in new entrée choices by identifying new, healthful, and appealing food choices. Monthly menus will be available on our school website and upon request, the nutritional content of meals will be made available.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals

St. Francis Xavier 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 school meals. We will utilize electronic identification and payment systems, and promote the availability of school meals to all students.

Meal Times and Scheduling

St. Francis Xavier School will:

- **provide students with at least 20 minutes for lunch;**
- **schedule meal periods at appropriate times (currently between 10:50 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.);**
- **whenever possible, not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat before or during such activities;**
- **combine lunch and recess activity for all students;**
- **provide access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before students eat meals or snacks;**
- **take reasonable steps to accommodate the dental regimens of students with special oral health needs.**

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutritional professionals will administer our school meal program. Professional development for all nutrition professionals in our school will be provided. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for school nutrition managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

St. Francis Xavier School will discourage students from sharing their food or beverage with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

School Garden

In support of children's health and nutrition education efforts, St. Francis Xavier School will implement a school garden. Students will be responsible for planning, planting, maintaining, and harvesting garden produce within an outdoor classroom environment. Harvested garden produce will be consumed by the students within the lunchroom setting.

Snacks

Snacks served to our Preschool and Kindergarten students during the school day will make a positive contribution to their diet and health. A variety of foods will be offered, following the nutritional guidelines established by the USDA. Milk will be the primary beverage, with water offered as well. St. Francis Xavier School will assess if and when to offer snacks based on the timing of school meals, student nutritional needs, and student ages.

Celebrations

It is recommended that school day celebrations involving food be limited to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

Nutrition Education and Promotion

St. Francis Xavier School teaches, encourages, and supports healthy eating by students. We will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- **provides 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;**
- **includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant participatory activities, such as promotions, taste testing, farm visits, etc.**
- **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);**
- **links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;**
- **includes training for teachers and other staff.**

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

We encourage regular daily physical activity for our students through recess and physical education classes. In order for students to fully embrace physical activity as a personal behavior, students also need opportunities beyond physical education class. We support:

- classroom health education complementing physical education by reinforcing the skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle, and reduce time spent on sedentary activities;**
- incorporating opportunities for physical activity into other subject lessons, when possible;**
- providing students with short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.**

Communication with Parents

St. Francis Xavier School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Nutrient analyses of school menus will be available, when requested. We will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet good nutritional standards.

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

Staff Wellness

St. Francis Xavier School values the health and well being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities that support staff efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Our Wellness Committee will encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff through education, fitness challenges, and other positive staff involvement programs.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education Classes

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

All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities and special health-care needs, will receive regular physical education throughout the school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (i.e. intramural sports) will not be substituted for this physical education requirement. Physical education classes will last a minimum of 30 minutes, and students will spend at least 50 percent of the class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess

All elementary school students will be given at least 25 minutes per day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors (weather-permitting). St. Francis Xavier School will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.

St. Francis Xavier School will discourage extended periods (i.e. periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities (i.e. 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.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

St. Francis Xavier School will offer extracurricular physical activity programs. The range of activities will meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs. Our 7th and 8th grade students will also be encouraged to participate in ISD 877 sports programs.

After-school childcare and enrichment programs will provide and encourage 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 (i.e. running laps, pushups) as punishment.

Safe Routes to School

St. Francis Xavier School will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to bus safely to/from school. When appropriate, St. Francis Xavier School will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. The availability of federal “safe routes to school” funds, administered by the state department of transportation, will be explored to finance such improvements. Students will be encouraged to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring

The Principal will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

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

The Principal will develop a summary report every three years. This report will be available to the EAC (Education Advisory Committee), Home and School Association, and school health services personnel.

Policy Review

St. Francis Xavier School assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, reviews of the nutrition and physical activity policies, provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity, and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements will be considered. As necessary, the wellness policies will be reviewed and work plans developed, in order to facilitate their implementation.

