

# Calvert Catholic Schools' Wellness Policies On Physical Activity and Nutrition

## Preamble

Whereas, children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive.

Whereas, good health fosters better student attendance and learning.

Whereas, nutritious foods and physical activity enable students to maintain healthy weight levels and body functions.

Whereas outside community participation is an essential element in the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies.

Whereas, this policy assures that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 10 of the Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1779) and sections 9(f) (1) and 17 (a) of Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1785(f) (1), 1776(a)), as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

## Policy Goals

We the Calvert Catholic Schools are committed to providing an environment conducive to children's overall health by implementing health nutrition information and physical activity opportunities. Therefore, it is the policy of Calvert Catholic Schools to:

- Help students acquire the desire to eat healthy foods and to stay active.
- Engage students, administration, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals and interested community members in developing, implementing, and reviewing district wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Provide all students in grades Pre-K through 12 with daily encouragement to be physically active.
- Allow students to have access to foods and beverages at school that meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- Participate in available federal school meal programs that pertain to our system.
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to all our students to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical participation.
- Provide a connection between health, nutrition, and community opportunities.

## Achievement of Policy Goals

## I. **School Health Council**

Calvert Catholic Schools will create, strengthen, and/or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and (as necessary) recommend school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as a resource to school sites for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and may include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, and health professionals.)

### **Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus.**

Meals served at school will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children.
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Meet minimum nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Include choices of low fat and fat-free milk.
- Ensure that all grains are whole grains.

Schools may share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, the school website & cafeteria menu boards.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Schools 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.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Schools:

- Will provide students with at least 20 minutes for lunch.
- Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g. lunch should be scheduled between 11a.m. and 1p.m.
- Should not schedule meetings during meal times, unless students may eat during the meeting.
- Will schedule recess periods prior to lunch periods as scheduling allows for this. (in elementary grades).
- Will provide students time to wash or sanitize their hands before they eat meals and snacks.
- 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).

### **School Food Service Staff:**

- Administers the school meal programs.

- Provides continuing nutritional development.
- Includes training for cafeteria workers and volunteers.

**Sharing Foods and Beverages.** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods and beverages with one another during meal and snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

**Foods and Beverages Sold Individually, (i.e. foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte lines, etc.)**

**Elementary Schools.** The school health council will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students during school hours. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in the elementary school should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should include low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

**Junior High and High Schools:** In junior high and high school, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte lines and vending machines) during the school day will meet nutrition and portion size standards.

**Allowed Beverages:** Water or seltzer water without added caloric sweeteners, fruit and vegetable juices, fruit-based drinks that contain 100% fruit juice, and unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverages (defined by the USDA).

**Not Allowed Beverages:** Soft drinks.

### **Meals and Snacks:**

- When food items are sold individually, healthy choices will be encouraged.
- Healthy snacks will be encouraged during the school day, after-school care, and enrichment programs. This will be done through education and implementation according to the needs of each campus.

## **II. Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Communication**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion:** Calvert Catholic Schools aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating habits. Schools should:

- Integrate nutrition education into the classroom as teachers feel it fits the acceptable curriculum.
- Incorporate nutrition education into the health curriculum.
- Promote health-enhancing nutrition practices such as eating fruits, vegetables, whole

- grain products, and low fat and fat-free dairy products.
- Provide nutrition education for teachers and other staff.

**Physical Activity.** Opportunities to engage in physical activity beyond the physical education class should be provided for students. Schools should:

- Provide classroom health education that teaches students to maintain a physically active lifestyle.
- Help students to learn that too much time spent on sedentary activities such as watching TV and playing electronic games has negative effects on their health.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day as appropriate, (during other subjects and/or between classes).

**Communication with Parents.** The schools will keep parents informed of how the School Wellness Policies are being implemented through newsletters and/or the schools' website. Information will be posted regarding educational topics on health and physical activity, extra curriculum programs, fun activities, and other health related news.

### III. Physical Education and Activity Opportunities

**Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** All students in graded K-12 including students with disabilities, and special health-care needs will participate in physical education. A qualified physical education teacher will teach all physical education in accordance with the Diocesan Course of Study Guidelines.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised outdoor (weather permitting) recess. Teachers will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Teachers will discourage extended periods of inactivity.

**Physical Activity Before and After School.** Calvert Catholic Schools will offer a range of extracurricular activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all 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.

**Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours.** School spaces and facilities should be available to students and staff, before, during, and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations pending availability and proper authorization. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

### IV. Monitoring and Policy Review

**Monitoring.** The School Administration (including but not limited to the School Board, Principal, and Superintendent) will ensure compliance with established system-wide nutrition

and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will ensure compliance with those policies in each building and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school principal.

The superintendent will review a summary report every three years on system-wide compliance with the school's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to parent/teacher organizations, school principal, and school health service personnel if so requested.

**Policy Review.** To help with the development of the Calvert Catholic Schools' wellness policies, each campus will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.

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 assessment, the health council will review;

- The nutrition and physical activity policies.
- The provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity;
- The nutrition and physical education policies and program elements.

The individual school buildings can, as necessary, include specific building objectives to this wellness policy and develop plans to facilitate their implementation.

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