

St. Mary School
Wellness Policy
On
Physical Activity and Nutrition

VISION STATEMENT

St. Paul reminds us that even our most everyday actions have a sacred significance. “People who eat do so to honor the Lord and they give thanks to God. People who do not eat abstain to honor the Lord and they give thanks to God. None of us lives as one’s own master, and none of us dies as one’s own master. While we live we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die we die as his servants. Both in life and in death we are the Lord’s.” (Romans 14: 6-8)

St. Mary School must have regulations in place that support the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition act, which encourages the establishment of healthy school environments, to reduce childhood obesity, and prevent diet-related diseases. The following regulations are hereby reaffirmed or enacted. It is our hope these regulations help further the above goals and also give glory to God.

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

Whereas, good health fosters students attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity:

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Thus, **St. Mary School** is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is our policy that:

- **St. Mary School** will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades **4K – 8** will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide student with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutritional needs of students; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- **St. Mary 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 THIS VISION

SCHOOL MEALS

Students are highly encouraged to participate in the school meal program. The St. Mary School Lunch manager shall strictly adhere to the National School Lunch Program rules regarding all aspects of the hot lunch program, including but not limited to their guidelines regarding the nutritional value and serving size amounts of the food served to students.

The following goals are in place in the school lunch program:

1. No fried foods are prepared; foods served that were traditionally prepared in fryers are always oven baked.
2. Low fat milk choices are always available.
3. Only mono-saturated oils are used in cooking.
4. Fresh fruits and vegetables will be served as often as possible, give their availability and affordability.
5. Vegetables will be only lightly seasoned with salt; salt shakers will not be put out for students, although pepper and sometime other flavorings will be available.
6. Use of processed foods will be limited to the extent possible.
7. Insure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Parents are partners in the hot lunch program.

1. They are asked to share knowledge of any food allergies with the hot lunch personnel. That information is shared with all school personnel as well.
2. Parents are welcome to share their wishes regarding restricting food amounts and types to individual children for reasons of healthy weight loss or gain.
3. Parents are invited to eat the hot lunches with their children, with only the courtesy of a pre-call to the kitchen or school office.

Cold lunch students are not allowed to have soda or sports drinks with their lunches and are encouraged to pack a healthy lunch.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

Families who qualify for free and reduced meals are encouraged to participate. All information is strictly confidential. Participation has a direct benefit in funding to our school.

Field Trips

The hot lunch program will provide a sack lunch and milk for all participants who normally buy lunch at school.

Meal Times and Scheduling

St. Mary School:

1. will strive to provide students with adequate time for meals (the American Food Service Association recommends at least 20 minutes for lunch from the time they are seated);
2. milk break/snack break will be **completed** a minimum of two hours before scheduled lunch;
3. should **not** schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities around mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
4. special meals, such as pizza parties, **cannot** replace school lunch;
5. Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

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

HEALTHY AND NUTRITIOUS SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

1. The sale of all food, beverages, and snacks to students during the school day shall be under the control of the principal or his/her designee.
2. **St. Mary School** will prohibit the sale of foods and beverages of minimum nutritional value in vending machines during the school day.
3. The distribution of foods sold for fundraising purposes will take place at the end of the instructional day.
4. **St. Mary School** reserves the right to limit quantities and exercise portion control of any food/beverage item offered at school.
5. Snacks served during the school day will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Below is a list suggested beverages and snacks.
6. **St. Mary 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.

Beverages

- Fruit juice and vegetable juice (100 percent)
- Reduced-fat, low-fat, or fat-free milk, white and flavored
- Bottled water and flavored water

Snacks

- Canned fruit (packed in 100 percent juice/no sugar added)
- Fresh fruit (e.g. apples and oranges)
- Pretzels
- Whole-grain bread products (e.g. bread sticks, rolls, bagels, and pita bread)
- Ready-to-eat, low-sugar cereals (6g sugar or less/100g cereal)
- Granola bars made with unsaturated fat
- Low-fat or non-fat yogurt and yogurt sticks
- Snack mixes of cereal and dried fruit with a small amount of nuts and seeds (low-sugar cereal)
- Raisins and other dried fruit (No sugar added)
- Peanut butter and low-fat crackers
- String cheese
- Popcorn
- Low-fat pudding snacks

Rewards

St. Mary School will limit the use of candy, food, and/or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. Food or beverages (including food served through school meals) will not be withheld as a punishment.

Celebrations

St. Mary School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. Parties will be scheduled after school lunch. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy snacks and treats for student celebrations and other events.

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROMOTION AND FOOD MARKETING

Nutrition Education and Promotion

St. Mary School strives to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students by providing nutrient education and engaging in the promotion of healthy nutrition habits:

- nutrition education 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 (i.e. Healthy Hearts curriculum);
- as part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- Include professional development for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

Students will receive 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.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education (P.E.) Physical education 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.

Instruction shall be provided at least **twice a week**, except that days on which special activities are conducted may be exempt.

Daily Recess

All elementary school students (K-4) will have at least 30 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which **St. Mary School** will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.

Physical Activity and Punishment

St. Mary School will not use physical activity (e.g. running laps, pushups) for punishment and will not withhold all opportunities for physical activity (e.g. recess) as punishment.