

DIOCESE OF DES MOINES
Catholic Schools Policies/Regulations

AUXILIARY SERVICES

Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness

It shall be the policy of the Diocesan Catholic Schools Board that, the Diocesan Schools Board promotes healthy students by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment.

The Diocesan Schools Board supports a healthy environment where students learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of students. Improved health optimizes student performance potential.

The Catholic schools in the Des Moines Diocese provide a comprehensive learning environment for developing and practicing lifelong wellness behaviors. The entire school environment, not just the classroom, shall be aligned with healthy goals to positively influence a student's understanding, beliefs and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity.

The Catholic schools in the Des Moines Diocese support and promote proper dietary habits contributing to students' health status and academic performance. All foods available on school grounds and at school sponsored activities during the instructional day should meet or exceed the school's nutrition practices.

Foods should be served with consideration toward nutritional integrity, variety, appeal, taste, safety and packaging to ensure high-quality meals.

Each Catholic school in the Des Moines Diocese will establish a local wellness committee. The committee shall include physical education teachers, the food service director and the school nurse when possible. The local wellness committee will develop a plan to implement and measure the Diocesan Schools Board wellness policy and monitor the effectiveness of the policy at the local level.

The local committee, in consultation with the building principal, will designate an individual to monitor local implementation and evaluation of the policy. The local committee will report annually to the local board regarding the effectiveness of the wellness policy as implemented at the local level, the extent to which the school is in compliance with the wellness policy and how it compares to model wellness policies. The board will make this annual assessment available to the parish(es) served by the school.

SPECIFIC WELLNESS GOALS

Nutrition Education and Promotion—Appendix A

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion. To accomplish this goal, the Schools will:

- Integrate nutrition education and promotion into other areas of the curriculum such, but not limited to math, science, language arts, and social studies;
- adequately prepare the staff responsible for nutrition education to deliver an accurate nutrition education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- have the school lunch program/cafeteria serve as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply classroom nutrition education; and
- comply with federal, state and local requirements, will promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods and health enhancing nutrition practices in the School Lunch Program.

Physical Activity—Appendix B

Physical Education

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will provide physical education that:

- is taught by a licensed physical education teacher;
- shall be taught in grades one through five a minimum of twice per week;
- shall be taught in grades six through eight a minimum of three times every two weeks; and
- shall be required in grades nine through twelve for a minimum of one-eighth unit each semester unless the student obtains a waiver.

Recess

Elementary and middle school students should be provided recess periods preferably outdoors, during the school day.

Physical Activity and Punishment

Employees should not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness—Appendix C

Integrating Physical Activity into Classroom Settings

Students need opportunities for physical activity beyond recess and physical education classes in order for them to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior. Toward that end, the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will:

- offer classroom health education that complements physical education;
- discourage sedentary activities, such as watching television, playing computer games, etc.; and
- encourage classroom teachers to provide activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness—Appendix C (Continued)

Communication with Parents

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will:

- encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet nutrition standards; and
- provide parents a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards and fundraising activities.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. The school will promote healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

Staff Wellness

The school values the health and well-being of every staff member and will work to support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Toward that end, each school will establish and maintain a staff wellness committee.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Available on Campus—Appendix D

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal law;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables; and
- serve dairy products containing a variety of fat levels from fat-free through 2%, as well as nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives.

Schools should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students.

Breakfast

To ensure that children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, schools will:

- operate a breakfast program, to the extent possible;
- notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast program, where available; and
- encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children.

Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Available on Campus—Appendix D (Continued)

Free and Reduced-Price Meals

The Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines 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 meals. Toward this end, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines may utilize electronic identification and payment systems.

Within the Diocese of Des Moines, it is the individual Catholic school's responsibility to:

- employ a food service director who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed according to current professional standards; and
- assure that all food service staff has had adequate pre-service training in food services operations; and provide continuing education opportunities according to their levels of responsibility

Sharing of Foods

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Des Moines, will to the extent practical, discourage students from sharing foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about communicable diseases, allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods Sold Outside the Meal (e.g., vending, a la carte, sales)

Based upon the premise that each local Catholic school has a unique set of circumstances relative to the availability, frequency, and variety of foods served outside the meal, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Des Moines should have the recommendation of the local Wellness Committee regarding the practices which should be supported and maintained in their building, keeping foremost in mind the nutrition guidelines for all foods available, with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Among, but not limited to, the areas that may be addressed by each local Wellness Committee could be:

- elementary school unique circumstances;
- secondary schools unique circumstances;
- beverages to be allowed or not allowed;
- foods items to be sold separately based upon nutrition guidelines;
- portion size of foods and beverages sold individually;
- foods involved in fundraising activities;
- foods served as snacks;
- foods served as rewards or in celebrations;
- foods served at school-sponsored events outside the school day;
- food safety; and
- foods served as summer program meals.

Plan for Measuring Implementation—Appendix E

Monitoring

The Des Moines Diocesan Schools Superintendent will ensure compliance with established Diocesan Schools Board nutrition and physical activity wellness policy.

In each local Catholic school:

- the building principal will ensure compliance with the Diocesan Schools Board Nutrition and Physical Activity Wellness Policy and will report on the school's compliance to the superintendent;
- food service staff will ensure compliance with the nutrition policy and goals within food service areas and will report on this matter to their building principal;
- the building principal will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the local school has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the building principal will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible;
- the superintendent will develop a summary report every three years on diocesan-wide compliance with the Diocesan Schools Board established nutrition and physical activity wellness policy, based on input from local schools within the diocese; and,
- the report will be provided to the Diocesan Schools Board and also distributed to all local school wellness committees, parent/teacher organizations, principals and health services personnel in the diocesan schools.

Policy Review

To help with the implementation of the Diocesan Schools Board nutrition and physical activity wellness policy, each local school within the diocese will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and practices. The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the diocesan level to identify and prioritize future needs. 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, the Diocesan Schools Office will review the nutrition and physical activity wellness policy, its goals and practices and the provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity.

The Diocesan Schools Office, and individual schools within the diocese, will collaborate to revise the wellness policy and goals, and develop work plans to facilitate future implementation.

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