

# INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL



## HEALTH & WELLNESS POLICY



2017 UPDATE

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# Introduction & Rationale

## Introduction

In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, PL 105-268, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement for all local agencies (including public and nonpublic, as well as, Residential Child Care Institutions) with a federally funded National School Lunch program. The USDA requires that each local educational agency that participates in the National School Lunch Program or other federal Child Nutrition Programs establishes a local school wellness policy for all schools under its jurisdiction. In response to this requirement, the International Charter School (ICS) convened a work group consisting of health, physical activity, and educational professionals representing a variety of organizations, plus students and parents, to develop a Health & Wellness Policy.

The Health & Wellness Policy developed by ICS meets the new federal requirement. It is based on science, research, and existing practices from exemplary states and local school districts around the United States. The first priority of the work group was to promote children's health and well-being. In addition, the feasibility of policy implementation was also considered.

## Rationale

The increasing rate of childhood obesity threatens to jeopardize the future health and productivity of our children. Will academic success become more and more difficult for students to attain as lifestyle changes diminish a child's ability to learn? Will the students of today be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents? Do over-nourished and malnourished children face similar adversities? A healthy school environment goes beyond school meals in the cafeteria. Living a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a healthy weight requires a combination of healthy food choices, knowledge of nutrition, and appropriate amounts of physical activity. All foods made available at school should offer children nutritious choices. Nutrition education and physical activity should be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The healthy, nutritionally astute, and physically active child is more likely to be academically successful.

The federal government recognizes that a coordinated effort by the entire community including child nutrition professionals, school board members, parents, students, school administrators, teachers and business community is warranted if we are to combat the threats that childhood obesity presents. These efforts involve adults serving as role models and community members being informed of the policies that improve the long-term health and well-being of students. ICS has a strategic role to play in improving the health and well-being of children.

# Nutrition Education Goals

At each grade-level, nutrition education will be offered as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote their health. Nutrition education will be incorporated into the school day as often as possible. The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence the students' eating behaviors.

## **Nutrition Education at ICS:**

- teaches consistent scientifically-based nutrition messages throughout the school, classroom, cafeteria, home, community, and in the media;
- is part of the health education curriculum;
- is integrated into the scope and sequence of the curriculum in core subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies, and elective subjects;
- includes the school cafeteria, which serves as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom;
- uses the Rhode Island Health Education Framework and addresses nutrition concepts progressively in grades K-12;
- provides enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory activities (e.g. taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens);
- offers information to families that encourages them to teach their children about health and nutrition, and assists them in planning nutritious meals for families;
- will be taught by staff who are adequately prepared and who participate in professional development activities in order to deliver an effective program;
- will include a school nutrition/health team to conduct nutrition education activities and promotions that involve parents, students, teachers, and the community.

# Physical Activity Goals

The primary goal of ICS's physical activity component is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, and understand the short and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthful lifestyle.

## Physical Education Classes K-5

- All students in grades K-5 will receive formal physical education classes once every three days for 45 minutes for the entire school year. Students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and those in alternative educational settings will be included.
- Students will spend at least 50 percent of the physical education class engaged in moderate to vigorous activity.
- The physical education curriculum should demonstrate progression and sequence and be consistent with Rhode Island and/or National Physical Education standards for grades K-5.
- All physical education classes will be taught by highly qualified physical education teachers.
- Physical education teacher-to-student ratios should be equivalent to those of other subject area classes in the school.
- Student participation in other activities involving physical activity (e.g. intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement.

## Physical Activity Across the Curriculum

- Opportunities for physical activity are regularly incorporated into other subject areas (e.g. math, language arts, science, and social studies).

## Daily Recess

- All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which students are encouraged (verbally and through the provision of space and equipment) to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- When feasible, recess will occur prior to lunch to ensure appropriate healthful food intake.
- Extended periods of inactivity, two hours or more, are discouraged. 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.

## Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

- ICS will offer some extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs.
- ICS will offer activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.
- ICS will educate and encourage participation in community or club activities.

- After-school child care and enrichment programs 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.

### **Rewards/Incentives/Consequences**

- Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g. running laps, push-ups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g. recess, physical education) as punishment.
- Students will not be denied physical activity for purposes of punishment, to make-up work, for testing purposes, etc.

### **Safe Routes to School**

- ICS will access and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk or bike to school. When appropriate, ICS will work together with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts.

### **Use of School facilities Outside of School Hours**

- ICS will develop a plan so that school spaces and facilities will be available to students, staff, and community members before, during, and after the school day; on weekends; and during school vacations.
- ICS will educate the community, including parents and staff, about utilizing the facility. These spaces and facilities also will be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs.
- School policies concerning safety will apply at all times that the facility is being used.

### **Health & Wellness Committee**

- ICS will develop a Health & Wellness Committee comprised of school personnel, community members, and students, to plan, implement, and assess ongoing activities that promote healthy lifestyles, particularly physical activity for all members of the school community.
- The Health & Wellness Committee will create a model to guide school decision-making related to physical activity and nutrition that encompasses all aspects of the school – from education of staff wellness to addressing smoking and tobacco use.

# Other School-Based Activities

ICS will create an environment that provides consistent wellness messages, is conducive to healthy eating and physical activity, and contributes to forming healthy life-long habits.

## Professional Development

- ICS will provide ongoing professional development and education for foodservice professionals, educators, administrators and other staff.
- ICS will provide nutrition and physical education for students, staff, parents, and, where appropriate, community members.

## Eating Environment

- ICS and staff will have adequate space to eat meals in clean, safe, pleasant surroundings and will have adequate time scheduled as near to the middle of the school day as possible to eat, relax, and socialize.
- Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand-washing and oral hygiene will be available during all meal periods.
- Consideration will be given for passing time, bathroom breaks, hand-washing, and socializing so as to allow ten minutes for breakfast and twenty minutes for lunch once the student is seated.

## Recess Before Lunch

- ICS will schedule recess before lunch when possible so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat. Activity before lunch also encourages nutrient intake.

## Fundraising

- School fundraising activities will support healthy lifestyles. Such activities may include physical activity (e.g. walk-a-thon), school support (e.g. selling school memorabilia) and/or academic achievement (e.g. spelling bee).
- The sale of food or beverages as a fundraiser will not take place from one hour before and one hour after the breakfast and lunch service. Food and beverages used must meet ICS nutritional guidelines.
- ICS will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.
- ICS will make a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.
- At least 50% of the fundraising activities will not involve the sale of food and/or beverages.

## Community/Family Involvement

- ICS will communicate with families on health or nutrition topics and solicit involvement in policy-making.

- ICS will provide community access to the school's physical activity facilities outside of the school day and/or form city-school partnerships to institute recreation programs utilizing school facilities when possible.
- ICS will provide physical activity and health education opportunities for the community and families (e.g. exercise classes, asthma education).

### **Staff Health & Wellness**

- Physical activities and/or nutrition services or programs will be designed to benefit the health of ICS staff.

### **Social & Health Services**

- Counseling services, which safeguard the physical, emotional, and social well-being of students are available to all students.
- ICS will promote health of students and help assure that students are healthy, in the classroom, and ready to learn by employing a school-nurse teacher.

# Nutrition Standards

Students' life-long eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. Foods of good nutritional content including fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods, and low-fat grain products will be available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school during the normal school day. Examples may include a la carte, snacks, vending machines, fundraising activities, parties, celebrations, and school sponsored events.

## General Guidelines

- Food pricing strategies will be designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items.
- Procedures will be in place for providing information to families, upon request, about the ingredients and nutritional values of the foods served.
- Food and beverages sold or served on school grounds or at school sponsored events during the normal school day will meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Standards for Food and Beverages set forth in this document.

## School Meal Program

- The school food service program will operate in accordance with the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1996 as amended and with applicable laws and regulations of the state of Rhode Island. ICS will comply with USDA regulations and state policies.
- ICS will offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For the purpose of this policy, "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" refers to the current set of recommendations of the federal government that are designed to help people choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic disease risks.
- Menus will be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel and will take into account students' cultural norms and preferences.
- Students with special dietary needs (e.g. diabetes, celiac disease, allergies) will be accommodated as required by USDA regulation.

## Snacks

- Healthy snacks will be encouraged. Families will be given a list of healthy snacks that students can bring to school.
- Healthy snacks will include fresh, dried, or canned fruits (in 100% juice only); vegetables; 1% or skim milk; and grains meeting the Standards for Food and Beverages set forth in this document.

## Parties and Celebrations

- ICS will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day.
- ICS will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.
- All food that will be distributed at parties or celebrations must be approved by the school nurse-teacher due to allergy concerns.

## School Sponsored Events

- Healthy choices of food and beverages that meet Standards for Food and Beverages will be offered at school sponsored events outside the school day.

### Standards for Food and Beverages

#### 1. Beverages

- Provide 100% fruit and vegetable juices and limit portion sizes to 4-12 ounces.
- Provide water – non-carbonated and unflavored without added sugar, artificial sweeteners, or caffeine.
- Provide milk – skim or 1% in portion sizes of 8-16 ounces. Flavored milk (chocolate or strawberry, low fat or skim, may be offered in up to 12 ounce serving sizes with no more than 36 grams of sugar in a 12 ounce portion.
- Eliminate the sale of soft drinks, sports drinks, punch, fruit drinks, iced tea, coffee and coffee-like beverages, and other items not included in allowable beverages listed above.
- Allow only water as a beverage in the classroom.

#### 2. Grains

- Serve whole grains which contain at least 2 grams of fiber per one ounce serving. One half of all grains served should be whole grain.
- Limit portion sizes to 1.25 – 2 ounces with most being 1.25 ounces.
- Limit total calories from fat to no more than 30%.
- Limit total calories from saturated fat to no more than 10%.
- Limit sugar content to no more than 35% of calories by weight, or less than 6 grams from sugar per serving.
- Limit the amount of trans fats.

#### 3. Fruits and Vegetables

- Offer fruits and vegetables prepared/packaged without added fat, sugar, or sodium. Low-fat dips and sauces on the side may be served in small portions to make foods more appealing.
- Offer ½ cup serving sizes of fruits and vegetables. Offer additional fruits and vegetables to help students reach the recommended 5-9 servings per day.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, especially colorful ones.

#### 4. Condiments and Miscellaneous

- Offer salad dressing containing no more than 6-12 grams of fat per ounce.

# Measurement & Evaluation Goals

- 1. Funding Support** – Funds to support policy implementation and/or evaluation. This includes school funds, donations, and grants.
- 2. Implementation** – A plan for executing the policy, including objectives, dates and person(s) responsible.
- 3. Monitoring and Evaluation** – Group or agency responsible for overseeing the policy, monitoring and evaluation implementation, or reporting the status of the policy to schools, parents and the community. This will be the responsibility of the Health & Wellness Committee in conjunction with the food service provider.
- 4. Revision** – Process for making changes to the policy based on evidence of implementation or effectiveness. The person responsible for this process will be the Health & Wellness Committee Chairperson or designee.

# Resources

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>

<http://www.thriveri.org>

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/AboutLunch/NSLPFactSheet.pdf>

<http://www.health.gov>