

CONNECTIONS PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Wellness Policy

ADAPTED FROM: ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION MODEL WELLNESS POLICY

Updated 9/2019 to Reflect the USDA Final Rule

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Connections PCS Wellness Policy

Connections Public Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. The school believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

This policy outlines the school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at the school have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus– in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- The school engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the wellness policy
- The school establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

Connections will convene a representative wellness committee that meets at least one time per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.

The membership will include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program, physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals; school administrators; school board members; school meals vendors, and the general public.

Leadership

The Wellness Policy Coordinator will convene the committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure the school's compliance with the policy.

The current official for oversight is Jason Schwerdtfeger, Wellness Policy Coordinator.

The names, titles, and contact information of the current committee members are: Rowena Mansanas(SASA, rowena_mansanas@connectionspcs.org), Olino Kotaki(SASA,olino_kotaki@connectionspcs.org), Cheryl Gravela(Business Manager, cheryl_gravela@connectionspcs.org), Shinji Salmoiraghi(School Food Service

Manager, shinji_salmoiraghi@connectionspcs.org) and Jason Schwerdtfeger(Wellness Policy Coordinator, jason_schwerdtfeger@connectionspcs.org).

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

Connections will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan will include specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. .

This wellness policy can be found at: connectionscharterchool.org

Recordkeeping

Connections will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the Wellness Coordinator's office and on digital computer files. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the school uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the wellness committee.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

Connections will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The school will make this information available via the school's website and/or school-wide communications. Annually, the school will also publicize the name and contact information of the school officials leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, Connections will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which the school is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the school's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the school's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Jason Schwerdtfeger(Wellness Policy Coordinator, jason_schwerdtfeger@connectionspcs.org).

Connections will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report. Connections will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessments and/or as the school's priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued.

The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

Connections is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The school will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the wellness committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. The school will use electronic mechanisms, (email/school website) and non-electronic mechanisms, (newsletters, parent notices) to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, and how to get involved and support the policy. Connections will notify the public about the content of or updates to the wellness policy and the availability of annual and triennial reports at least once per year.

Nutrition

School Meals

Connections is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans fat per serving; and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

Connections participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP), and the Seamless Summer Option. The school is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The school offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout the school campus. The school will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

Connections will strive to ensure that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating and meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are **sold or promoted** to students on the school campus during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

Connections will recommend that all foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents.
3. Rewards and incentives. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus* **during the school day***.

- Schools will strive to also use non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, fun runs, etc.).

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

Connections will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing as many evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques as possible through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.

- Alternative entrée options are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
- A reimbursable meal can be created in the service area available to students
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

Connections will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

Connections will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior

- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

III. **Physical Activity**

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements. To the extent practicable, the school will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The school will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

Connections will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The school will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year.

All **secondary students** (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

The physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades (elementary) and the school will require middle and high school students to take and pass at least one health education course. The health education curriculum will include a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity

- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess (Elementary)

All elementary schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

Connections recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The District recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

Connections offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The school will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by: offering sports club opportunities.

Community Partnerships

Connections will develop relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy’s implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

Connections will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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program.intake@usda.gov

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