

# Covenant Christian School's Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

## Preamble

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## Preamble

- Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;
- Whereas, good health fosters student 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, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;
- Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;
- Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;
- Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;
- Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and
- Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Covenant Christian School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, wellbeing, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Covenant Christian School that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.

To the maximum extent practicable, CCS will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program, and Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program).

Schools 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 THESE POLICY GOALS:**

### **I. School Health Advisory Council**

CCS will create, strengthen, and work to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The school health council shall consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and shall include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, and teachers. De facto members of the School Health Advisory Council shall be the Chair of the Board of Directors (or designee) **Mike Todd**, the Food Services Director **Michelle Brock**, the President of the Parent-Teacher Fellowship (or designee) **Sharon Aikman**, the Executive Director **Shelly Hunt**, and the Head of School **Rob Akers** (who shall be responsible for monitoring the School Wellness Policy).

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

#### **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 statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;<sup>2</sup>

- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk<sup>3</sup> and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.<sup>3,4</sup>

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

- CCS will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- CCS will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, "grab-and-go" breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- CCS will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- CCS will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** CCS 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. Toward this end, CCS may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as "grab-and-go" or classroom breakfast.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Schools:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods (in elementary schools);
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- 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).

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.<sup>6</sup>

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** CCS discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or 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 [snack] lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)**

**Elementary School Students.** The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary school grades. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools should be sold as balanced meals. If available, foods and beverages sold individually should be limited to low-fat and non-fat milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables.

**Middle/Junior High and High School Students.** For students in middle and high school grades, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through a la carte [snack] lines, vending machines, or fundraising activities) during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

#### **Beverages**

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water<sup>7</sup> without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

#### **Foods**

- A food item sold individually:
  - will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined;
  - will have no more than 35% of its *weight* from added sugars;<sup>8</sup>
  - will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; will contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.
- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold.

Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; cooked, dried, or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables (that meet the above fat and sodium guidelines).<sup>9</sup>

### **Portion Sizes**

Limit portion sizes of foods and beverages sold individually to those listed below:

- One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky;
- One ounce for cookies;
- Two ounces for cereal bars, granola bars, pastries, muffins, doughnuts, bagels, and other bakery items;
- Four fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, low-fat or fat-free ice cream;
- Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt;
- Twelve fluid ounces for beverages, excluding water; and
- The portion size of a la carte entrees and side dishes, including potatoes, will not be greater than the size of comparable portions offered as part of school meals. Fruits and non-fried vegetables are exempt from portion-size limits.

**Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school district will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

**Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs 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. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

- If eligible, schools that provide snacks through after-school programs will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

**Celebrations.** Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. ***Non-Sold food for special class activities shall be comply with special dietary concerns of affected students and shall comply with the same guidelines as sold food and beverages.***

### III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** Covenant Christian School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- 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;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) 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.

**Communications with Parents.** CCS will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The district/school will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Schools should encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The district/school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, CCS will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

CCS will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

**Food Marketing in Schools.** School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).<sup>11</sup> School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages<sup>12</sup> is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; in-school television, such as Channel One; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities.

**Staff Wellness.** Covenant Christian School highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

#### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities, Physical Education, and Physical Activity Goals**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** All students in grades K-12, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education (or its equivalent of 150 minutes/week for elementary school students and 225 minutes/week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**Daily Recess and After School Care.** All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

CCS discourages extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of physical inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

After-school childcare 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.

### **Physical Activity Goals.**

**Goal 1:** CCS’s nutrition promotion and education and physical education programs shall be based on research, consistent with the expectations established in the current curriculum frameworks, and designed to build the skills and knowledge that all students need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

*Objective 1.1: By the end of May each year, all K-8 students will be provided with a nutrition education program.*

**Goal 2:** Nutrition education shall be provided as part of the health education program in grades K-8 and integrated into core academic subjects and after-school programs as appropriate.

*Objective 2.1: By the end of May each year, CCS will integrate nutrition promotion and education into the K-8 curriculum including USDA food pyramid and nutritional values of foods as measured by the Wellness Policy Checklist.*

**Goal 3:** All students in all grades shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education, and recess, school athletic programs, extracurricular programs, before- and after-school programs, and other structured and unstructured activities.

*Objective 3.1: By the end of May each year, CCS will integrate physical education into the curriculum including kinesthetic movements, and individual and team sports as measured by the Wellness Policy Checklist.*

*Objective 3.2: By the end of May each year, CCS will provide physical activity through physical education, through recess activities, athletics (seasonal sports) and/or after-school activities, as measured by the Wellness*

***Policy Checklist.***

**Goal 4:** The Superintendent or designee shall encourage staff to serve as positive role models. He/she shall promote and may provide opportunities for regular physical activity among employees.

***Objective 4.1: By the end of May each year, staff will serve as positive role models for physical activity as measured by the Wellness Policy Checklist.***

**Goal 5:** Professional development shall include instructional strategies that assess health knowledge and skills and promote healthy behaviors.

***Objective 5.1: By the end of May each year, professional development will include health education as measured by the Wellness Policy Checklist.***

**Goal 6:** To encourage consistent health messages between the home and school environment, the Head of School or designee may disseminate health information to parents/guardians. Outreach to parents/guardians shall emphasize the relationship between student health and academic performance.

***Objective 6.1: By the end of May each year, all parents/guardians of all students will receive health information emphasizing the relationship between nutrition and physical activity and academic achievement as measured by the Wellness Policy Checklist), and monthly Food Service menus.***

The Board of Directors prohibits the marketing and advertising of non-nutritious foods and beverages through signage, vending machine fronts, logos, scoreboards, school supplies, advertisements in school publications, or other means.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

## **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring.** The principal or designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. In

each school, the principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the superintendent (or if done at the school level, to the school principal). In addition, the school district will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the district has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

The principal or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals, and school health services personnel in the district.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the district's wellness policies, each school in the district will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.<sup>13</sup> The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the district level to identify and prioritize 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 school district will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The district, and individual schools within the district, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

## Footnotes

<sup>2</sup> To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

<sup>3</sup> As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

<sup>4</sup> A whole grain is one labeled as a "whole" grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include "whole" wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

<sup>5</sup> It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or "paid" meals.

<sup>6</sup> School nutrition staff development programs are available through the USDA, School Nutrition Association, and National Food Service Management Institute.

<sup>7</sup> Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

<sup>8</sup> If a food manufacturer fails to provide the *added* sugars content of a food item, use the percentage of weight from total sugars (in place of the percentage of weight from *added* sugars), and exempt fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods from this total sugars limit.

<sup>9</sup> Schools that have vending machines are encouraged to include refrigerated snack vending machines, which can accommodate fruits, vegetables, yogurts, and other perishable items.

<sup>10</sup> Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

<sup>11</sup> Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

<sup>12</sup> Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

<sup>13</sup> Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.