

# **St. Elizabeth School Wellness Policies On Physical Activity and Nutrition**

## **Introduction**

St. Elizabeth School is a co-educational, nonpublic program for elementary, middle, and high school students ages 6-21 in grades 1-12, who are referred by their local school systems. The program prepares students for a Maryland High School Diploma or a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion.

Students receive instruction in academics, social/emotional development, and vocational areas. St. Elizabeth School serves students from counties across the State, including but not limited to, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County and Queen Anne County. St. Elizabeth School also accepts the placement of students with private tuition (private pay).

Every student who attends St. Elizabeth School has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students also receive related services, which may include Speech, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Counseling, and one-to-one assistance.

## **Preamble**

St. Elizabeth School (SES) recognizes that:

- children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;
- good health fosters student attendance and education;
- 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;
- 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;
- only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;
- 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.

St. Elizabeth School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the St. Elizabeth School that:

- The school will engage members of the SES community (parents, teachers, food service personnel, health professionals, and other interested SES community members) in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Students in all grades will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.

- Food service personnel will provide students 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.
- The school will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.
- The School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity.

## **I. School Health & Wellness Committee**

The School Health & Wellness Committee will develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee will consist of a group of individuals that may include parents, students, teachers and other staff members, food service personnel, members of the school board, school administrators, and health professionals.

## **II. Nutrition Policy**

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases as adults. St. Elizabeth School has a responsibility to help students and staff members establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented school nutrition programs have been shown to positively influence students' eating habits.

This policy pertains to all foods and beverages made available to students from 7:00 a.m. until the end of the regular school day, including those sold a' la carte and in the school store.

The primary components of this nutrition policy are:

- A food service program that employs well-prepared staff who serve appealing choices of nutritious foods that meet nutrition standards established by the USDA and meet the requirements of reimbursable meals established by the Maryland State Department of Education School Nutrition Programs. Food service refers to the School's operation of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and includes all food service operations conducted by the School principally for the benefit of the students, all of the revenue from which is used solely for the operation or improvement of such food services.
- Clean and pleasant eating areas for students and staff with adequate time for unhurried eating.
- A program of nutrition instruction that is integrated within the school health education curriculum and coordinated with the food service program; that is taught by well-prepared and well-supported staff; and that is aimed at influencing students' knowledge, attitudes, and eating habits.
- An overall school environment that encourages students to make healthy food choices.

### **A. The Food Service Operation**

#### **1. Financial Management**

- a. It is acknowledged that the feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility. To supplement their efforts, St. Elizabeth School will operate a food service program to ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods that they need to stay healthy and learn well.

- b. The food service program will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational and support activity and budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students.

#### B. Program Requirements

1. During each school day the food service program will offer breakfast and lunch. These meals must meet the nutrition standards established by the USDA for reimbursable meals.
2. St. Elizabeth School will make every effort to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced-price meals and that eligible families are encouraged to apply. The program will maintain the confidentiality of students and families applying for or receiving free or reduced-price meals.
3. 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 applicable laws and regulations of the State of Maryland. St. Elizabeth School will offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Menus will be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel.

#### C. Nutritious Food Choices

1. 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. This includes:
  - A la Carte offerings in the food service program.
  - Food and beverages choices in the school store.
  - Refreshments served at student parties and celebrations.

St. Elizabeth School will take efforts to encourage students to make nutritious choices.

2. Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) are prohibited from being served or sold anywhere a reimbursable meal is served, sold, and/or eaten. Foods of minimal nutritional value, as defined by USDA, include carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum, hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy-coated popcorn.

#### D. Nutrition Standards

The following specific nutrition standards pertain to all foods and beverages served or made available to students on campus in school meals, as a la carte items and as competitive foods.

1. Food Items Sold or Offered Individually:
  - a. Calories/Sugars/Sodium
    - 1) 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.
    - 2) Will have no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars.
    - 3) Will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

## 2. Fats and Fried Foods:

- a. Continuing with the first day of the 2019-2020 School Year, SES will not use frying as a method of on-site preparation for foods served as part of school meals.
- b. French fries and other fried potato products will not exceed 3 ounces per serving and will not be offered more than a two times a week. Generally, all such products will be baked rather than fried.
- c. Foods that have been flash-fried by the manufacturer may be served but should be baked.
- d. Baked potato products (wedges, slices, whole, and new) that are produced from raw potatoes and have not been pre-fried, flash-fried or deep fat-fried in any way may be served without restriction.

## 3. Portion Sizes

The following maximum portion size restrictions pertain to all foods and beverages served or made available to students on campus with the exception of school meals, which are governed by USDA regulations:

<b>Fruits and vegetables</b>	<i>portion size<sup>1</sup></i> (oz)	<i>price/portion<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>calories/portion<sup>3</sup></i>	<b>Snacks</b>	<i>portion size<sup>4</sup></i> (oz)	<i>price/portion<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>calories/portion<sup>3</sup></i>
Apples	5.2	0.36	77	Chocolate candy	0.9	0.24	262
Applesauce, jarred	4.6	0.22	100	Cookies	1.0	0.16	123
Bananas	4.1	0.18	102	Corn chips	1.0	0.21	140
Cantaloupe	3.5	0.38	33	Crackers	0.9	0.16	114
Fruit cocktail, canned*	4.4	0.31	71	Cupcakes	2.0	0.34	174
Grapes	3.0	0.32	59	Danish	2.6	0.47	271
Oranges, navel	3.8	0.20	53	Donuts	2.1	0.36	235
Peaches, canned*	4.4	0.31	68	Fruit rolls	0.8	0.28	82
Pineapple, canned*	4.4	0.26	75	Graham crackers	0.9	0.14	102
Plum*	2.9	0.25	38	Granola bars	1.1	0.30	119
Raisins*	1.3	0.19	109	Ice cream	3.8	0.39	196
Strawberries*	2.9	0.41	27	Muffins	3.3	0.83	369
Tangerines	4.8	0.51	72	Pizza, from frozen	3.3	0.63	252
Watermelon	8.7	0.25	74	Popsicles and bars	1 count	0.34	80
Broccoli florets*	1.6	0.18	12	Potato chips	1.1	0.27	169
Carrots, baby*	2.3	0.19	22	Pretzels	1.5	0.25	168
Celery*	2.1	0.16	10	Pudding, ready-to-eat	4.1	0.38	152
Red peppers*	2.6	0.60	23	Sandwich crackers	1.3	0.20	183
Sweet potatoes, cooked*	3.5	0.33	90	Toaster pastries	2.7	0.35	299
Tomatoes, grape/cherry*	3.2	0.55	16	Tortilla chips	1.2	0.21	161

4. Fruit and/or vegetables will be offered daily at breakfast and lunch. Frozen and canned fruits should be packed in natural juice, water, or light syrup.

#### E. Competitive Foods

Competitive foods (foods and beverages sold or made available to students that compete with the school's operation of the National School Lunch program or School Breakfast Program) may not be made available to students anywhere on campus during meal periods. This does not pertain to food items made available by the school Food Service Program. Competitive foods in this policy do not include FMNVs, which are not allowed until the end of the regular school day. Income from the sale of competitive foods must accrue to the benefit of the school food service or student organizations approved by the School.

#### F. Staffing

1. St. Elizabeth School will employ a properly qualified and certified food service manager to run the school food service program and with the School's administrative staff, satisfy reporting requirements.
2. Dining room supervisory staff (teachers, classroom assistants, housekeeping staff, etc.) will receive appropriate training in how to maintain safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environments.
3. The Food Service Manager and Administrator and staff will serve as a resource for and collaborate with classroom teachers regarding the school nutrition-food service environment and nutritional education (e.g., furnish teachers with guidelines and suggestions for choosing healthy food items when food is used in the classroom as part of the lesson).

#### G. Adequate Eating Space and Time and Appropriate Use of Food

1. Students and staff will have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and will have adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize. Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand washing will be available during all meal periods.
2. Rewards and incentives for academic and desirable behavior will be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to students receiving them. As a general rule, if food is included in recognition of academic performance or desirable behavior, it should be used in the general celebration of the achievement, not as the reward. Exceptions will be allowed for students whose behavior plans/IEPs call for food-based rewards.
3. Food will not be withheld from students as punishment.

#### H. Food Safety

1. All food service equipment and facilities will meet applicable local and state standards concerning health, safe food preparation, handling and storage, drinking water, sanitation, and workplace safety.
2. All food service personnel will have adequate pre-service training and must hold a State-issued or equivalent training certificate.

#### I. Staff as Role Models

St. Elizabeth School staff members are encouraged to model healthy eating Behaviors.

### **III. Nutrition Promotion & Education and Physical Activity**

#### A. Nutrition Education and Promotion

St. Elizabeth School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The School set goals to provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level 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 may be part of 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, 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 and other school foods;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

#### B. Staff Qualifications

St. Elizabeth School staff responsible for nutrition education will be adequately prepared to effectively deliver the instruction appropriately adapted for the various learning levels of the students. The School will provide resources, including classroom materials for teaching nutrition and its contribution to healthy living and healthy lifestyles.

#### C. 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. In response, the school has set goals to be sure:

- 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 may be incorporated into other subject lessons;
- classroom teachers may provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate;
- additional programs such as athletics will be offered for students who want to engage in additional physical activities.

#### D. Communications with Parents

The School will send home nutrition information and include nutrition tips on the monthly school menu.

#### E. Staff Wellness

St. Elizabeth School 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 and Physical Education**

##### **A. Daily Physical Education**

1. St. Elizabeth School students are in school for approximately 30 hours a week during which time the School must meet the requirements of the IEP, including related services, which is mandated by the State Department of Education and the federal IDEA. To the extent possible the Physical Education curriculum will align with national standards for physical education.
2. A certified physical education teacher will teach Physical Education classes.
3. All students, including students with special health-care needs, will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a daily basis.
4. Elementary age students follow the Howard County Curriculum and reflects an average of 90 minutes of physical education per week. Middle school students have a schedule that reflects 50 minutes of physical education every other day. High school students have program offerings that enable the students to meet graduation requirements. High school students are also able to select physical education as a general elective.
5. Elementary age students are provided a 30 minute daily recess and middle and high school students are provided with daily opportunities for physical activity with no time limits.
6. Students may be given opportunities for physical activity to be incorporated into other subject lessons, and given short physical activity breaks, where appropriate.
7. All students will have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular physical activity programs, such as intramural programs and interscholastic sports teams, where appropriate.
8. Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

#### **V. Standards for Foods Provided, not Sold:**

- A. St. Elizabeth School promotes the use of healthy and active parties. In the rare occasions that there may be a classroom party (with food provided), classroom snacks provided by a parent, or other foods given as incentives, school stakeholders are encouraged to incorporate healthy food items, activities, or other healthy ideas as an alternative to traditional methods used in celebration.

#### **VII. Food and Beverage Marketing**

- A. Marketing of unhealthy food or food that does not typically meet healthy guidelines standards are prohibited from being advertised on the website or on the walls of the school. The only exception to this is if a sign is displayed for recycling and is not directly related to promoting the displayed food.

#### **VIII. Monitoring and Policy Review**

##### **A. Policy Review**

In the development of the Wellness Policy, the SES School Health & Wellness Committee will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical education environments and policies. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help with the review of policy compliance, to assess

progress and to determine areas in need of improvement. SES will, as necessary, revise the School's Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition and facilitate implementation of the changes.

**B. Monitoring**

The Executive Director, Principal, Finance Director or designee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

The School Food Service Administrator will ensure compliance with the St. Elizabeth School's Nutrition Policy and will report on the School's compliance to the Executive Director, Principal, or Finance Director. In addition, the School Food Service staff will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the School has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the School will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Updates and implementation of the Wellness Policy will be provided to school stakeholders and community members on an annual basis. An updated policy will be added to the school's website: [www.stelizabeth-school.org](http://www.stelizabeth-school.org). Communication and meetings will also take place throughout the school year.