



Learn. Lead. Serve. Succeed!

School Wellness Policy

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I. 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 scholar 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, 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, the Alma del Mar School District is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Alma del Mar School District that:

- Alma del Mar will engage the school community in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All scholars 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*.
- Alma del Mar will provide scholars with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of scholars; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the scholar body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for scholars to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, Alma del Mar will participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program.

- Alma del Mar 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.

II. Policies Governing Foods and Beverages

A. School Meals Overview

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;
- include a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- include only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA) unless otherwise specified by a medical provider
- include whole grains as at least half of the grains served.

Parents and scholars will have the opportunity to offer feedback regarding the taste and quality of meals, and their feedback will be considered in determining which foods will remain on the menu and which foods will be removed from the menu. Nutrition information for all breakfast and lunch items will be available to scholars and parents.

B. 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, Alma del Mar will operate the School Breakfast Program such that all scholars, whether they take the bus or are transported by parents, have the opportunity to eat a healthful breakfast.

Alma del Mar will discuss the School Breakfast Program with families during initial home visits and parent orientations.

C. Beverages

The guidelines below apply both to beverages provided at school and to beverages brought from home.

The following beverages will be permitted at Alma del Mar:

- water or seltzer water 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 (as defined by the USDA)
- dietary supplements as prescribed by a doctor or other medical professional

The following beverages will not be permitted at Alma del Mar. If brought to school, the beverages listed below will be discarded:

- sodas (including diet sodas)
- sports drinks
- iced teas (including diet 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)

D. Food Items Sold Individually

Any food items sold individually through vending machines or other means at Alma del Mar will meet the following criteria. Any such item:

- 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;
- 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).

To the full extent practicable, sizes of foods and beverages sold individually will be limited to the following:

- 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.

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.

E. Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to scholars' diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Alma del Mar will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. Alma del Mar will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel, and parents.

Alma del Mar will work with the National School Lunch Program in relation to afterschool snacks.

F. Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Alma del Mar will not allow scholars to share their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times given concerns about allergies and other dietary restrictions.

G. Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and nutrition education efforts, individuals conducting fundraising involving the sale or distribution of food on school premises will be informed of guidelines for the nutritional value of foods prior to planning any fundraising activities. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

H. Use of Food as a Reward

Alma del Mar will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

I. Celebrations

Celebrations involving food during the regular school day will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). Alma del Mar will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

J. School-Sponsored Events

Alma del Mar will make every reasonable effort to ensure that foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Meal Times and Scheduling

In order to ensure that scholars develop healthy eating habits, Alma del Mar will take the following steps:

- provide scholars with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times
- not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, except when scholars may eat during such activities;
- schedule lunch periods to follow recess periods;
- provide scholars access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

IV. Food Marketing

Alma del Mar 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).

Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors (and are, therefore, allowable) include: vending machine covers promoting water; pricing structures that promote healthy options in a la carte lines or vending machines; sales of fruit for fundraisers; and coupons for discount gym memberships.

V. 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, Alma del Mar will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in the school. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for all personnel according to their levels of responsibility.

VI. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion

A. Nutrition Education and Promotion

Alma del Mar aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by scholars. Alma del Mar will 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 scholars with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is incorporated into 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;
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

B. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

For scholars to receive the nationally---recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and for scholars to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, scholars 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 lessons across discipline;
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

C. Communications with Parents

Alma del Mar will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. Alma del Mar will offer events focused on healthy lifestyles for families at least once a year through the Parent Council or Booster Club, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Alma del Mar will ask 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. Alma del Mar 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, Alma del Mar will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

Alma del Mar will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, or 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

VII. Staff Wellness

Alma del Mar 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. Alma del Mar will encourage staff members to participate in the School Wellness Council to ensure that there exists a plan to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

VIII. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

A. Physical Education

All scholars, including scholars with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive physical education three days a week for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Scholar involvement in other activities involving physical activity (*e.g.*, interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Scholars will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

B. Recess

All scholars grades K-6 will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which staff will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Alma del Mar will discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for scholars to remain indoors for long periods of time, Alma del Mar will give scholars periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

C. Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Every day will begin with an opportunity for scholars to be physically active through running, jogging, or engaging in a similar activity either outdoors or indoors as dictated by weather conditions and space parameters. The afterschool program will also include sports, dance, and other opportunities for scholars to be physically active. Alma del Mar will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all scholars, including boys, girls, scholars with disabilities, and scholars with special health-care needs.

D. Physical Activity and Punishment

Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities to participate in physical education as punishment.

E. Safe Routes to School

Alma del Mar will assess the safety of walking and biking routes and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for scholars to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, Alma del Mar will work with local public works, public safety, and/or police departments in those efforts. Alma del Mar will explore the availability of federal “safe routes to school” funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements. Alma del Mar will encourage scholars to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school and will work with the Southeastern Regional transit Authority to provide transit passes for scholars of an appropriate age.

F. Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours

Outdoor school spaces and equipment will be available to scholars, staff, and community members before and after the school day, on weekends, and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities will also be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

IX. Monitoring and Policy Review

A. Monitoring

The School Leadership Team will ensure compliance with the nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the School Leadership Team. In addition, Alma del Mar will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

The School Leadership Team will develop a summary report every three years on compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. That report will be provided to the Board of Trustees and distributed to all school health councils, Parent Councils, school staff, and school health services personnel. The report will also be publicly available through the website and, upon request, at the Main Office.

B. Policy Review

Assessments will be conducted every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, Alma del Mar will review all 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. Alma del Mar, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.